"THE SCHOLAR AS PREACHER"

(Second Series)

A DISCIPLE'S RELIGION

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Sermons

BY

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PREFACE

THE unbeneficed English clergyman has no pulpit of his own. He can only preach when he is invited or when he is ordered. The people whom he is called upon to address are for the most part those towards whom he has no special pastoral relation. Thus generally he must speak *urbi et orbi*, though it be but a little city and a small world that he is called to address. The sermons in this volume may illustrate the journeys of a wandering preacher. They were all preached when I held no ecclesiastical benefice. They were addressed to congregations in S. Paul's and Westminster Abbey, in several cathedral churches, in the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin, and Durham, in parish churches on occasions of special commemoration, in the Temple Church, in the preacher's own College Chapel and the chapels of other Colleges at Oxford, and in the Chapel of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn.

It is difficult to find a title for such a volume. I have chosen that which I gave some years ago to four sermons in which I tried to trace a fourfold claim which would be made on a disciple of Jesus Christ in the first

days of the Church and to show how that claim, in those four aspects, is still emphatic to-day. The same thought may perhaps be found throughout the book, for each sermon is an attempt to put before Christians, of every sort of profession and practice, education and life, and on very different occasions, the appeal and the claim of the changeless Christ as it comes to one who "counts not himself to have apprehended," but still hopes, with the great witness of the ancient days, that at length he may begin to be a disciple.

There is one advantage in constant change of pulpit and of audience: it should enable a preacher to see how the Divine Word, which it is his so feebly to echo and interpret, strikes home to all sorts and conditions of men. So at least I have found it, when men and women of whom I knew nothing have written to tell me of their beliefs, their blessings, their experiences. Teachers and learners at the University, lawyers, artists, scientists, men of letters, mothers and wives bowed down by sorrow, masters and servants, old and young, are—we learn as we preach to them—eagerly seeking after God: it is ours to tell them that for their faith, as for ours, other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, and that for the heroes of our history as well as the saints of our Church there is but one Name in which we can find the salvation of all that is best in our life, one Religion in which with assured confidence we may rejoice to be disciples.

In nothing is it more difficult and (perhaps) more necessary to acknowledge indebtedness than in sermons.

They are written for a definite occasion, for the most part with no thought of preservation, certainly none of publication. I think that almost always when I have actually quoted an author (except in the case of the Bible or a poet) I have given the reference in a note. But these sermons have been written at intervals during the last ten years or more of a life chiefly given to teaching history and writing about it, and I feel sure that many writers I was thinking of when I wrote them I have forgotten now: the book indeed seems to me as I look at it to-day to be a sort of record of the influences of many years; but there is one I am sure which is constant often when it is not mentioned and which is responsible for many a thought that has not been explicitly acknowledged: I mean that of the great preacher of Righteousness and loyal disciple of the Truth, whom it was my privilege only once to hear, Phillips Brooks. With his I would place the name of one still living, from whom we in Oxford can never learn too much, Henry Scott Holland. From such as these, as we sit with them at the feet of our Divine Master, we may win the hope that for us too there is still the happiness that may be won in the religion of a disciple.

Nearly all these sermons were printed shortly after they were delivered, either from a shorthand writer's report or from my manuscript; and my thanks are due to the *Guardian*, the *Church Times*, and the *Church Family Newspaper*, from which I have recovered them.

W. H. HUTTON.

SERMONS

RELIGIO DISCIPULI

HISTORICAL COMMEMORATION

CHRIST'S CALL IN THE CHURCH

CHRIST'S CALL IN THE CHURCH—*continued*

LAW AND LIFE

RELIGIO DISCIPULI

I

SIMPLICITY

"The simplicity . . . that is towards Christ."—2 Cor. xi. 3.
"In the singleness of your heart, as unto Christ."—Eph. vi. 5.

THEY are two beautiful and refreshing phrases, and they represent very truly something of freshness that Christianity gave to a world satiated with sin.

When we look back to reconsider, and, if it may be, to recapture for ourselves, the primal ideas which Christ came on earth to revivify for men, there is one that seems to us to stand first of them, perhaps to overshadow them — simplicity, singleness of heart. The single eye, the single heart, those Christ called for: they only could see and know Him. And so it is again that S. Paul speaks. His fear is that his converts, over whom he is jealous with a godly jealousy, may be withdrawn from the pure gospel of the Life of Jesus which he placarded before them, to another Jesus, a different spirit, a different gospel—things quite possible to preach and very easily leading astray—and may be beguiled and corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is towards Christ.

And that is the first and perpetual appeal of the

Church of Christ. Here is a Divine character, a Divine life, set forth; here is the emphatic revelation which truly speaks to all hearts. "As for the gods of the heathen, they are but idols; it is the Lord That made the heavens." "Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." Here are the primal thoughts of religion, which link man to the Almighty, the fear of God and the love of God. That revelation sounds the very first note in the religion of a disciple. The Majesty of God involves, in the man who will be His servant, the simplicity that is towards Christ. So it is that the first Apologists always speak: to know God, to see Him, does demand a simplicity of intent, a singleness of eye. As Theophilus of Antioch wrote:—

"Show me your true self, and I will show you my God . . . for God is seen by those who are enabled to see Him when they have the eyes of their soul opened."

Thus then Christianity came into the world with an appeal of simplicity, an appeal which could only be answered by the single heart.

What a contrast it was to the world the old poets sing of! What a change from the gaieties, the luxuries, the bewildering philosophies, the contending theories of life, the impossible polytheisms. There, in the dawning of a new world, stood the pale figure of Christ upon the shore, with voice of love and hands that were pierced, calling the children to Him, those that had eyes to see and ears to hear. That is the contrast. So the great Roman satirist helps us to put it. On the one side there was the spread of unbelief

through the strange complications of mythology, the *subterranea regna*, the *tot millia cumba:* even the pure fountain of Egeria was defiled; and against all the corruption even a good man found his efforts unavailing: the Stoic ideal of simplicity was uplifted in vain. Unconsciously Juvenal was seeking just that power for singleness of heart which only Christ could give.

And can we here in this city ever forget how wonderfully the thought of the Christian simplicity in all its inspiring contrast to the confused contentions of Pagan systems has been set forth by a great Oxford writer?[1] From the tragic search for the true life, the thinker is brought to the sight of a Christian Eucharist. The fresh half-light of dawn in the solemn marble court shows the clear, yet symbolic, significance of the one great motive of worship and of life:—

> "Sursum corda.
> Habemus ad Dominum.
> Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro"—

all "a constraining motive of activity and hope." The voice of the Church said in those old days quite clearly —There is, behind the warring philosophies, the single reality of God, and with it "the spirit of a wonderful hope"; only—that is essential—you must put away with a great will-effort, and in the spirit of a life-long consecration, the sins that so easily beset you; you must come with a conscious abandonment of guile, moral and intellectual, a surrender to the spirit of simplicity that is towards Christ. So Christianity

[1] Pater, *Marius the Epicurean.*

appealed to the single-hearted. So in every age the appeal is repeated by the voice of the Church.

That, in such different ways, was the appeal of the hermits, of S. Francis of Assisi, of all pure moralists and clear thinkers. "Let us try to think well," says Pascal; "this is the beginning of morals." The life of man in all ages is a struggle against the complications, the obstructions, that arise, and that surround and clog, the free expression of the soul which naturally stretches forth its hands towards God. Original sin, the undeniable tendency of mankind towards evil, the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches—they are the artificialities, the deceits which blind the eyes and harden the hearts which God has created for Himself.

It is in that sense that we may truly say that a return to nature is a return to God, and that we may welcome every assertion of a desire for simplification, or recognition of the power of primal thoughts and primal emotions.

And that, if I mistake not, is the tendency of the most real movement of our own age. The writers who most powerfully represent the thought of Europe to-day are those who are weary of conventionality, and who have done with the sentimental or the artificial presentation of life. Human nature is to stand out as it is, human thought is to fall back on the primal verities of love and fear. So the Danish dramatist, in his harsh and exaggerated revolt, shows passions base and manners unchastened, the abrupt insistencies of

men and women who long for *reality* of life and thought, with no trammels of convention and no restraint that society has imposed. So—how unlike at first sight—the Belgian poet seeks simplicity in a world of romantic fancy, out of whose strange medieval setting there peep wistful figures straining their eyes into the darkness, pathetic children with no language but a cry, blind folk robbed of their guide by unconquerable death. All these have their effect of contrast to the artificial life of to-day. The world that they go back to is, like Rousseau's, a fancied one, and yet it is a protest for truth, and right, and singleness of heart. Or, take what is so different a literary effort from that of the modern romanticists, and yet has the same motive behind it, the work of the Russian ascetic who has come in his search for simplicity to a reaction like that of the heretics of old. He seeks—it would seem—to show how, under the conventional society of his country, barbarism is quite close to the surface; and then he takes the barbarism, purges some, but not all, of its passions, and calls it Christianity. How vain, but how pathetic!

Nearer to the truth are the French writers with whom English readers are perhaps better acquainted—the men who have found in life nothing that is permanent save the soul and God. Every vice has been tasted, every sensation experienced; and not from mere satiety, but because there was a real search for truth, and because nothing can satisfy that but God, they come, one by one, by divers ways, to throw them-

selves at the foot of the Cross. So the Church when she speaks to doubters dwells first on quite simple truths—those things that the doubter does believe and which have, like all truth, the power of leading farther into the Truth. There is a very beautiful book in which a great French writer tells the story of that conversion, the story of his sickness and of his turning to God—*La Bonne Souffrance.* Into the life so full of interests, so fenced about with the pleasant distractions of the man of letters, so "precious" and so preoccupied, comes the clear Light before which all these visions fade away into the darkness, or sink backwards to form part of the train of the Master of all the World. "Only pray and read the Gospel" is the advice of the minister of God; and the message sinks into the heart. There came a profound and mysterious transformation, before which the miracles and mysteries of the Gospel ceased to be incredible. The veil was taken from the eyes; the "true self" recognised the true God.

There you have the artificial life of elaborate civilisation ended by the insistence of the ultimate realities; love that comes through suffering, fear that cannot be put aside when man is driven in upon himself. And the religion of a disciple must be built upon love and fear; and perfect love casteth out fear.

I have taken these instances because literature such as this seems to me the best illustration of the thought of Europe to-day, and the clearest indication of the direction in which it moves. And, indeed,

though the mass of mankind have quite a healthy contempt for all letters and the literary craft, it would be a great mistake to imagine that literature is ever far sundered from actual life.

We have our proof at home. Our own literature has come sharply through the life of our nation these last three years[1] into sudden contact with reality. Those who speak to us most clearly now tell us of life as it is, not as rhetoricians, or philosophers, or even poets image it; they speak to us of camps and battlefields, of the primal passions of humanity, and of the thoughts of man as he goes down quick into the grave. And, even when the novelists seem to love brutality and blood, we know quite well these are not what will remain the fixed memories of a great struggle. We know the truth of the words of an English chaplain which reached us from the war:—

"The constant presence of God in His beautiful works, and the prospect of meeting Him face to face in death each day, helped men to be serious. God and mother were always in our thoughts and hearts."

This, then, is what we come to in the fugitive thoughts which I have put before you to-day. What is the basis of the religion of a disciple? It is that which men in every age have sought, and never more than they are seeking now — a direct approach to the prime realities of human nature, the simplicity that is towards Christ. Lent reminds us that there is a very practical side to this; to-day [Ash

[1] Said in 1902.

Wednesday] calls us to think that the persistent fact with which religion has to deal is sin. Strip away those things in your life that God did not put there, or does not sanction there; break down the barriers that prevent your seeing yourself as you are and Him as He is. How easy it is to *say* those words, how familiar they are! and yet they cannot be said once too often. It is the artificiality of men's lives, the insincerities even of their sins, the trappings and fripperies of their philosophies—ay, and of their religions—which prevent their seeing God.

And now we have the great opportunity given us. We can take up every lesson of the hour and apply it to the great work of life, the realisation of Christ in the heart, the bringing His perfect life to bear on the sins and miseries of our time. The rich, how much they need this lesson of simplicity to be brought home to them! The poor, God help them, how they look to us, who try to follow Christ, for example in faith and life!

We cannot avoid an answer, and the first word of our answer, please God, shall be this. A disciple of Christ is first of all one who says to God, with George Herbert at his *Mattens*—

> "Indeed, man's whole estate
> Amounts (and richly) to serve Thee"—

and who in all his life sets before him the clear ideal of singleness of heart—

> "His words and works and fashion, too,
> All of a piece, and all are clear and straight."

The outer life must be a picture of the inner. To declare this is not to say that men and women must not live as the duty of their lives calls them, for that, too, comes from God. It is not the profession, the trade, the position in the world, that makes or mars the disciple. There are no finer pictures of pure goodness, of Christlike simplicity and self-denial, than those which have come down to us from among the courtiers of the most corrupt society that England ever saw—the court of Charles II. It is not the comfort, perhaps it is hardly even the luxury, of to-day that stands in the way of Christ. The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, are more than nineteen centuries old; and not the best critic of them is he who says that they are in every aspect common and unclean. No, it is the *use* which is our trial. It is the imperative direction, "Do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus," which, if we press it quite home, will bring us to the simplicity that is towards Christ.

II

PATIENCE

"And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing."—S. JAMES i. 4.

WHEN in the early days of the Church the convert to Christ had learnt to live by his faith, and when he had understood that the first necessity of a disciple's religion was simplicity, singleness of heart; when he went out into the world thus cased in the armour of God, there was a lesson for him as severe and searching as any that he had passed through on his way to the peace of Jesus Christ. There is no thought more frequently repeated, insisted upon with more urgency, throughout the whole of the New Testament than this—that the great need of the disciple who has begun to walk in the ways of Christ is patience. "In your patience ye shall win your souls" (S. Luke xxi. 19), said the Lord Himself when He spoke to His first and nearest disciples of the tribulations that were coming upon the earth. It was upon those who should bring forth fruit with patience (S. Luke viii. 15) that His blessing was to rest. S. Paul and S. James, however in other respects their

thoughts may have run in different channels, thought and spoke alike in this. The tribulation through which they passed wrought patience (Rom. v. 3); it was only through the patience that comes of the comfort of God's Holy Spirit that they could hope (Rom. xv. 4). The ministry of God's servants, so S. Paul himself had learnt, was above all things a ministry of patience (2 Cor. vi. 4); it was in his patience that his own son in the faith had come to recognise the Divine source of his mission (2 Tim. iii. 10). It was the lesson he gave to old men, who so readily fall aweary of well-doing, that they "be sound" in patience (Titus ii. 2) as well as in faith. As for S. James, the whole lesson of his Epistle might be summed up in the word, because the works, upon the need of which he so trenchantly insists, can be wrought only by patience. The social work of Christ in the world, no less than His spiritual touch on the soul of man, can have full course only through patience. In the stress of change into the new world where every Jewish hope seemed to be shattered, it was yet the Old Testament that could best assure the converts of the truth in which alone they could be free (S. James v. 7–14); the prophets, and Job, were their examples, just as the primal work of man himself taught the same lesson, for it waited patiently for the precious fruit of the earth. And the thoughts of S. James (S. James i. 3, 4) have a singular closeness to that of S. Peter (2 S. Peter ii. 6). To the temperance of simplicity must be added patience; and without patience the work of God in the soul cannot be com-

plete, the man perfect and entire, wanting nothing. The thought of the intensely practical missionary was reflected, too, in the Apocalypse of the inspired prophet, who was their companion in the patience of Jesus (Rev. i. 9), and to whom God gave it to say to the sorely tried city "because thou didst keep the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial that cometh upon the whole world" (Rev. iii. 10).

But when we turn from the religion of the disciple of old to the religion of the disciple of to-day, we ask what is meant now by the word so familiar to the confessors and martyrs of the age of persecution. "The patience of the saints"—it was a fit phrase for the teaching of Roman slaves, even when they were Christ's freedmen. But how could they transmit it to their children, down the long line lighted by the Sun that shineth ever more and more towards the perfect day? The record of humanity does not greatly vary from century to century—disillusionment and loss preach the same lesson to generation after generation—but strange indeed is the difference in the appeal to different temperaments and in different times.

There is the monastic ideal: there is the ideal of the warrior or the builder of empire: but still we shall find the best expression of the thought among famous books. For, indeed, literature is full of suggestive contrasts as to what men mean by patience. I do not know any more pointed than those that are given us by the two great names of Montaigne and Pascal.

The first has the experience of a life that has refused

nothing. Every side of human activity—the intellectual interest always very keen, and yet with the very coarsest and grossest thoughts ever quite near the surface—every experience of youth and manhood, he has undergone, and weighed, and appreciated. And such a life has begotten in him a rare tolerance—of others, and of himself. He has learnt to watch, and to learn from, the sad, stolid patience of the poor, the endurance of the peasant who works on while his child lies dead, the Stoicism in humble life that is so patent to the onlooker. He has learnt to suffer fools gladly, to go quietly through a time of trouble, to live tranquilly, as he says, during the ruin of his country. And he can look forward, too, to death, with a certain trustfulness, believing that there will never be a sharp change, since he has known none, and that he will pass into something, which he very dimly imagines, and, from sheer lack of interest, does not care to dwell on, out of a life which has been a succession of changes by a very easy procession, where Nature, the guide along the way, has "lent us her hand." On all his extraordinary self-revelation there is certainly stamped the mark of a tolerant patience; but it is the patience that is born of perpetual doubt. And it has its fine aspects; we can admire it, though not wholly. A wisdom that is patient, a knowledge that can yet tolerate the slowness of other men, is always impressive, and good. But Montaigne's tolerance is a tolerance of deliberate evil as well as of necessary imperfection; and it is a tolerance of evil in himself as well as in others. He

stands still, and lets the world go by. He is patient with it. He does not strive with those who wrong him or misunderstand. But neither does he strive with those who wreck human happiness by their appetite; he is patient with the foul as well as with the meek.

There is doubt everywhere, in all the picture. Is it worth while ever to contest? Is it worth while to believe? Is it worth while to question, even, whether you do believe or not? Let us wait and see. The morrow will be not unlike to-day. This is patience: but patience has not her perfect work, her "full effect."

Pascal's is a very different patience. "Life," it is an often-quoted saying, "is such a comedy to those who think, such a tragedy to those who feel." Montaigne has thought, certainly; Pascal has also felt. An absorbing intellectual inquisitiveness, a mental activity that is never at rest, have led him to the feet of God. He has learnt, too, by constant suffering. He has seen life at its darkest; he has dwelt in the valley of the shadow of death, and he has come to fear no evil. The rod that gave correction, the staff that supported, have guided his way. But the whole progress towards truth and peace has been austere, and he knows, as it has been said,[1] "that, be appearances what they may, there are close at hand to us every day contingencies too terrible to speak of; there are, at any rate, in the end, dread certainties that nothing can avert." The "last act," Pascal says, "is always tragic, however happy may have been the comedy of all the rest."

[1] Dean Church, *Pascal*, etc., pp. 21, 22.

His patience has come through the conviction that the knowledge of God must begin in trying to do His will. "Revelation," said Newman, "was not given to satisfy doubt, but to make us better men; and it is as we become better men that it becomes light and peace to our souls."

That is the spirit of Pascal's patience. It is the spirit of the Cross of Christ. An earnest striving for goodness causes, must cause, an infinite patience; that is not the half-fretful washing of the hands that puts aside all responsibilities, like Montaigne, or like Ecclesiasticus—"Woe unto you that have lost patience—what will ye do in the day when the Lord shall visit you?" (Ecclus. ii. 14)—but the true patience of the perfect work, perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.

Towards that patience, maybe, the writer of Ecclesiasticus was striving, but he had hardly reached the great conclusion, which comes with the Christian Revelation, that the law of Progress is a law of Patience. You can only be perfect and whole, wanting nothing, if you let Patience have her full effect, says S. James.

It is true: and we may well take heed to the advice.

Has our own age at all risen to this preaching? If there is, however superficial it may be in some respects, a real, even if blind, response to the Christian ideal of simplicity, is there any answering echo to the voice of Christian patience? It is difficult indeed to say that there is. If an ancient philosopher, or a Christian evangelist, or a medieval king, or a scholar of the Renaissance, or those great men of letters whom I have named, were to come to life again and be set to

examine the doings of to-day, we can hardly doubt that their first judgment would be "Woe unto you that have lost patience." That is certainly the first and obvious aspect of our life—a haste to be rich, a haste to be learned, a haste to be victorious, a haste to be happy; and when we receive a check in any of these things we are surprised and discouraged. No new question arises, but, if we can have our way, it shall be discussed, and decided, at once, and then cleared out of the way for others. How many burning questions there are; and we have hardly singed our fingers at them before they go out. Law and letters, theology and fashion, the same mark is on them all. And even social questions, with which, if anything, our generation is seriously anxious to deal, are touched too often with this light and hasty hand. We still hear, though perhaps less frequently than we did ten years ago, suggestions, cheerful and confident, of a common happiness to be obtained by an enforced municipal uniformity, a social order to be established by confiscation, temperance and purity to be sown broadcast by Act of Parliament, and compulsory education to be made universally acceptable by the elimination of God. The last report of an important philanthropic work in London, inaugurated in memory of an honoured Oxford name, contains but one reference to the Name of our Father or our Redeemer, and then only in the pertinent text that "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation." All this seems to mean not, perhaps, so much that God is forgotten—though I fear that it

often does mean that—as that the whole tendency of modern life is against deliberation, that the demand for progress is stronger than the desire for permanence.

But surely if the experience of past ages is worth anything at all we should have learnt that no greater harm can be done to humanity than by the impatient treatment of social questions. It is bitter indeed to have to wait while the suffering of the poor cries aloud for help, and the selfishness of the rich—we are tempted to say—for vengeance; and while new openings for human energy seem only to increase the sum of human misery and sin. But if force—and it has been shown a thousand times—is no remedy, still less is haste.

Yet happily there is an answer at hand. It comes through the absolutely certain witness of Science and of History, the voice of God speaking through Nature and the story of human life. No progress has ever been permanent that has not been deliberate; and it is the chief hope of the future that this, even in the midst of our impatience, is being slowly recognised in matters in which some of the most important interests of humanity are concerned.

Without doubt the most conspicuous instance of this is to be found in the present position of medicine and the art of healing. It is now understood that as diseases are generally slow in their course, so a cure to be effective cannot be rapid. The extraordinary patience of investigation, the indomitable steadfastness in research into every aspect of disease and every possible method of cure, which mark the scientists and physicians

of the day, are among the greatest glories of a noble profession, and the most powerful factors in the physical improvement—and through that the moral too—of the race. The change from empiricism to patient and most laborious and continuous investigation in medicine is one of the most significant facts in the history of our time. Its results, conspicuous even now, must soon be incalculably great. It is impossible to say how much human misery has been alleviated by the patient methods of science.

We are slowly learning the same thing from the teaching of history. The more minutely we investigate, the more certain and the more valuable are our results. Thirty years ago it would not have seemed a commonplace to say this; but we are passing, visibly, from an era of hasty generalisations to an era of diligent (if dull) research. The subject is hardly yet a popular one; but we may hope that it is becoming clear that the more minute and patient is our inquiry into, and the more accurate our knowledge of, the history of man, the more hopeful should be the outlook of those who have at heart the progress of humanity towards the great peace of God.

In an impatient world science and history may speak but to a few, though theirs are the methods, we can hardly doubt, which will conquer in the end. But religion should speak—ah! if we could only make it —to every human soul. The work of God in the world, and in the heart of each of us, is infinitely patient. The evolution of humanity, the long prepara-

tion of the ages, show that the union of the perfected human nature with the Godhead itself was the culmination of a long process. It was "when the fulness of time" was come that "God sent forth from Himself His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem us from the law, that we might receive adoption as sons." That is the slow process and the sure foundation of the redemption of the world. And so it is with us all. God is very patient with us. We need to be very patient with ourselves. How slowly we learn to break off from habits of sin. How slowly we learn to weigh our motives and test our desires, to prune away our selfish longings, and to submit to the slow discipline of Christ.

"Let patience have its perfect work."

Am I straining the words of S. James too much when I say that they make emphatic the real strength of patience? It lies in work. It is not the contemplative, but the active, patience, which has with it God's promise of the future. Patience that is merely contemplative and tolerant is not far removed from cynicism. Patience that works has ever with it—it is no more than half a contradiction—something of a Divine discontent.

"For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main."

The lesson of Christian patience is, indeed, like all

the truth that is in Christ Jesus, full of strength for the life that now is, as well as for the world that is to be. Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and though it doth not yet appear what we shall be, yet we know, if we know anything of the patient waiting for Christ, that when He shall appear we shall be made like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. More wonderful and more beautiful is the lesson every day that we try to learn. Each new life that is won to obedience and faith bears its witness in the patience and long-suffering of God. As we have passed along the nave of this great Cathedral Church[1] we must often have looked at the strange memorial of one of its greatest Deans, the only memorial there which survived the Great Fire unharmed. The story of the life of that great poet-preacher John Donne is one of the most striking examples of the great law that may be traced in God's action on the soul of man. Years of forgetfulness and sin: the infinite patience and the Divine allurements: then the time of faithful and triumphing witness for Christ. Again and again must the piety of those who watched the idle, pleasure-spent days have been tempted to say of the life so wasted and misused—"Cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground?" But the infinite patience preserved it: and its fruit at the end testified to the nurture of His Hand.

It is a wonderful lesson that God teaches us in such lives, and in others less noted but as much loved, a lesson whose wonder and beauty grows as we ponder

[1] S. Paul's.

and watch. Like the patient processes which give us the loveliness of nature, which deck the birds in gay plumage, and paint the beauty of flowers, and pile up the "everlasting" hills, is the patience which deals with us one by one, which suggests new thoughts of goodness and purity, which supplies new opportunities for high endeavours that would help us to shake off the meanness of our lower nature, which gives daily new grace through what seem chance ideas, and the contact of friends, and what we fancy the haphazard circumstances of each day's life. "Let patience have her perfect work, her full effect"—that is the way of God. Only, the preacher of the patience of Christ would say, Do not frustrate it, do not by haste or fretfulness, or irresolution, threaten, or retard, or destroy the work which God would do in your soul. He would make you perfect, just as, through its infinite toil and suffering, He would perfect the world. It may be a long time He will give you in this world, or it may be short; you may serve your generation and many others and fall asleep in honoured age, or you may be called away before you seem even to have begun to work. But it will all be God's time.

That is the lesson which, in our day as of old, the disciple must set himself to learn. Where better could we be helped to learn it than in a home, like this, of old loyalties, of faith, and duty, and singleness of heart, that have borne their fruit with patience?

So may God give to us also to be patient in our own

hearts, to seek Him humbly, and constantly, and perseveringly, to try earnestly to rule our own lives in deliberation and calmness, and without ever turning back from what we know is good, and pure, and right, however far above us or in front it may seem. So the disciple's religion and his work, whether it lie in the advancement of learning, or in the redress of social evils, or in the humble labour which, if it is not noticed by men, is yet named by God, will stand at the great day when Patience has indeed finished her task, and the God of Patience is the God to Whom all flesh has come.

III

MISSION

"Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide."—S. JOHN xv. 16.

SIMPLICITY and patience are essentials of the disciple's religion, each of them fit expressions of the duty of one who is the slave of Christ. As in the old days, so now.

But the next step is a great one. "I have not called you slaves," says Christ, "ye are My friends." The disciple is raised to the intimate affection of his Teacher. And with that we Christians pass into the close companionship of our Lord Himself.

Much of what we have said before might be felt by those who were not of Christ's religion, and might form for the new disciple a strong link with the past of his own life, with the thoughts, aspirations, moral struggles, which had brought him to the feet of Jesus and into the fellowship of the Church. With the thought of *Mission*, on the other hand, a man comes decisively, unalterably, into the atmosphere that is distinctively Christian, even into the close companionship of the Master Himself.

And so we are able, as we understand more of what God is, and of what He requires of us, to appeal for our example, and to look for our guidance, to the acts and the special words of His very life on earth. We learn that we are all His missionaries, because we remember that last night of His among His friends. We put aside the law, or the philosophy, or even the human nature in its imperfection, which may have been our pedagogue to lead us to Christ, and we take our lesson from the Gospel itself, written, as it were, in the inner sanctuary of the Church.

He must be a sceptic indeed who can doubt that the scene really happened, that the words were really said—"Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide."

It was on the way towards Gethsemane that our Lord said these words. It was, as He knew, just when the last tragic act of His earthly life was to begin. He had instituted the Holy Sacrament, which was to be a perpetual memorial of His Passion, He had given the promise of the perpetual Advocate, and with it, in the upper chamber, those words of inspiration and counsel which were treasured in the glowing heart of His beloved disciple. As He drew near to the great trial His spirit was sore troubled; He testified, says S. John, with that solemn adjuration which He used in times of deep emotion and intimate revelation—"Amen, amen, verily, verily, I say unto you." But, in His distress of spirit, His disciples were still near

to His heart. To the last He was preparing them with words of comfort, with parables of support, assuring them of the reality of the union which existed between them, a union which earthly death could not sever. "I am the vine, ye are the branches. Now already ye are clean, *because* of the word which I have spoken unto you." The revelation of God is the very source of your purity. So He leads their thoughts away from themselves, and upwards, to God; He shows them, while, perhaps, they are trembling with anticipation of an unknown future of disaster—for they could not but have seen in the solemnities of those hours that a crisis was coming for them and for their Master—He shows them, as they walk beside Him in the moonlight, hushed in solemn awe, that the future is with God, that their work is with God, that whatever happens now, they can look beyond it, they must look beyond it, to the union of love and joy which is eternal.

"If ye keep My Commandments ye shall abide in My love: even as I have kept My Father's Commandments and abide in His love."

Then the new Commandment—those words that S. John never to the end of his long life forgot, but had always on his lips—to love one another. With it that solemn note in warning of what was now so close at hand, like a great bell breaking in upon the calm talk in the cool night. "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." We can imagine how they caught their breath, and

looked at one another as He said those words. And then, "*Ye* are My friends." What doubt was there now that He knew that He was going to His death, and that it was, in some mysterious way, for their sakes? But they have not time to dwell on the thought; again, just as He leads them up the slopes to Gethsemane, He leads their souls upwards to the thought that all this mystery and sorrow is in His hands, not theirs.

"No longer," as at first before this great revelation, "do I call you bond-servants: for the bond-servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends: for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known unto you. Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide."

It was the one great inspiring thought for that moment of fearful anticipation. Have we chosen wrong, perhaps some were tempted to think, when we followed this Prophet of Nazareth? He is leading us, He is going Himself, to judgment and to death.

Are we worthy of Him? may have thought the nobler spirits; have *we* anything truly of His love and self-sacrifice? Even then, at that moment, Peter may have felt moved to say, in the weakness that was so soon to conquer him, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Did we choose right? But the word of Jesus snatches them away from their dread, and takes them up into the heaven where God's design is planned.

"Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you."

That is the truth of the whole matter, that is the real history of the disciple's life, of the Apostle's faith, and mission, and future—"*I* chose you, and appointed that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide."

There, indeed, was the heart of it for them, and for us. For them because of the future that lay before them—certainly if it had been their own choice they would not have been equal to it; certainly those who forsook Him and fled, who hardly dared to stand afar off to watch His Cross, certainly they would not have been able, even with the inspiration of the Resurrection, to carry the Gospel into all the world, to brave the prison and the sword and the fire, if every step was their own choice, if each new venture was their own. No! it was not theirs, but God's. That is what the life of Jesus meant, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the Church of the Apostles. "Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go forth and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide."

Mission—the state of being sent by supreme authority.

We have surrounded the word with a special sanctity, raising it to its highest power. We have kept the title of missionaries for those who have gone out, at the word of the supreme authority of conscience, to distant and heathen lands, who have renounced, as every true missionary must in heart be ready to renounce, their

country, their parents, every one they hold dear. There is a striking passage in the work of a modern French writer which tries to express how acceptance of Mission affects even those who stand far apart from it. He is describing the departure of a band of missionaries, sent forth with softly sung litanies and solemn blessings, inspiring even those who witnessed their dedication with something of the agony of the Lord Jesus on the eve of His sacrifice, on the tragic night under the shadow of the olives. Thus he describes the devotion of the missionary:—

"He goes away for ever, to live in frightful climates, among barbarians and savages. He presents himself to them alone, and without defence, having only his guardian angel as escort, and armed only with courage and the Gospel. To those savages, trembling with terror before threatening idols, he speaks of a God of Love, Who wills to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. To those beings, governed only by their appetites, he claims to teach Christian morality, which subdues evil instincts, and to inculcate new virtues, of which he gives at the same time the example. The spirit of war and hate is the normal condition of these unhappy people; the missionary requires that they should pardon their enemies, and says to them from the first, 'Peace be with you.'

"Their first action is that of theft and rapine; the missionary orders them to be charitable and to despise the goods of this world. They live in almost the intercourse of brutes; the missionary invites them to chaste

family life. They make slaves of the conquered, and traffic in human flesh; the missionary declares to them that all men are brothers in Jesus Christ, and enjoins them to break the chains and fetters.

"What perils there are for this priest, full of meekness, who can only plead the Cross, to the hideous army raised against him on every side! Often he falls, struck down before arriving at the first halting-place of his Apostolic journey, before having even made one convert. But long ago he sacrificed his life, he is resigned to torture and death. What do I say? He desires, he hopes for his glorious death, and he accepts it with delight, convinced that the blood of a martyr is more fruitful in an ungodly land than even the water of baptism, and that the Name of that God, in Whose Name he trusts in his torture, will not be forgotten by the tormentors who are struck by his heroism, and whom he blesses as he expires."[1]

Truly, indeed, does M. Coppée add that even he who has no hope of a future life, if still he keeps the reverence for goodness, cannot refuse to such men the tribute of admiration and respect.

For us that is the highest response to the call of God's supreme authority, the highest expression of the sense of Mission. "Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide." But, in humbler ways, it is true of all the ministers of Christ.

[1] *La Bonne Souffrance* (Mrs. John Welby's English Translation, *Happy Suffering*, pp. 62–63).

It is the sole source of their hope, as of any success that God may give them. It is the sole strength of every servant of God.[1] Our own choice is so weak, we should leave Christ alone, as the Apostles did, among His enemies. We should gird ourselves, like S. Peter, in our youth: but in our age it must need another to gird us, and carry us far beyond where we have seen and known, into new work, with all its difficulties, sorrows, perhaps terrors, that God has chosen and foreseen. Sometimes it is a hard lesson to learn—it strikes so surely at the root of self-will; but we shall thank God that we learn it when we feel its strength and support—that very strength that came to S. Paul in his long, weary journeys through Asia, and to S. John in his enforced rest on Patmos. "Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you." It is My choice, My appointment, My Mission, and then the result is Mine too—"Ye *shall* bear fruit, and your fruit *shall* remain."

And, indeed, that word of Jesus Christ is the real foundation of all human work. The Mission of God. That is the very principle of our life: we come into the world without our own will, we live and move and have our being by forces beyond our power completely to control. Like our Master, we come from God, and we go to God. The Mission of God,—it is the inner philosophy of our work, for, indeed, the work is not ours, but His. The whole ordering of it is in His hands—the limitations, the successes, the real achieve-

[1] Cf. H. S. Holland, *Creed and Character*, p. 132.

ment, or the half-finished scheme, these are beyond us. We do not know why one man's failure is of so much more value to the world than another's success, or why some are cramped and fettered on every side and yet in the liberty of their souls can work triumphs for God. It is God's work and God's choice. The spiritual hunger of the minister of Christ, the zeal for righteousness of the lawyer, the artist's delight in beauty, and the poet's longing for truth, each of these—and the excellence which God stamps as the ideal of every work to which man may turn his mind and his hand—are due solely to the mission of Christ. They answer to the reality in the mind of God. They come from Him, not us. That surely is the consolation which we all so much need as the days go on. God has sent me here—where the work is exhausting, and perhaps unsuccessful, where it seems not to lead me to Him, but to keep me in bypaths where the sun of His Presence can scarce penetrate the shade. But I have this work to do, not something else, this to which God Who chose me has appointed me. In the courts, in the sanctuary, in the open fields, at the desk, in the cloister, or on the sick-bed, God has placed me, and there beside me is the work which He designs to be done, to bear fruit and to abide.

So, I believe, it appeals to us as we look into the meaning of our Lord's words. But they have another aspect too. Who are the men whom God chooses for His work? Surely if the choice had been left to us we should have chosen them, for each work, of one

distinct type. We have our ideal of a great artist, lawyer, merchant, priest; there is a character that stands out before us as we say those words, strong with its own especial excellences, its own qualities admirably fitted, perhaps limited, to the work. If we were to fill such or such a post we should look, and rightly, for such and such powers. We should fit the task to the man, the man to the task, according to the ideal of our mind.

But Christ has no ideals. They belong to the half-lights and the shadows across the glass through which we see darkly. Christ *knows*, and His knowledge issues in the endless variety of His choice.

"Thou wouldest not have looked for me if Thou hadst not already found me," wrote Pascal. And the choice involves the power to carry out the work. That is the lesson which great churches such as this may well hand on to our generation to-day. Our memorials of saints and heroes are reminders of God's faithfulness. Yesterday and now He is the same; and so He will be for ever. Great names have handed on to us the lessons of Christ's love and of His choice. It is ours to use them while it is called to-day. God's choice of our work for us, of ourselves for His service, is still insistent, and it is still able to break down every barrier of sin, and weakness, and reluctance, and to enrol us—even us—whatever our work, station, age, failures, in the number of those who faithfully and boldly follow where Christ leads.

That—we cannot but think as we stand here—is the

great appeal of ancient institutions for education, for worship, for the love of God and man. They point to the days of old when Christ has never failed one who trusted Him, and they say that so it will be in the future when we are passed into the peace of God.

IV

SACRIFICE

"Wherefore when He entereth into the world He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body didst Thou prepare for me. In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hadst no pleasure: Then said I, Lo, I am come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, Thy will."—HEB. x. 5, 6, 7.

"I am the Good Shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep."—S. JOHN x. 11.

THE disciple of Christ could not feel in the early days that he was isolated, separated from his friends or his past. In Christ truly he was a new creature, and the world in which he moved had become new to him. Yet he moved freely; and nothing was he taught more clearly than that true progress includes the past. It was a significant characteristic of Christianity that, just because it recognised the soul to be by nature Christian, it welcomed, preserved, fulfilled, the thoughts which lay at the heart of the old religions. It had its own roots deep in Judaism, in which it recognised the true leading of God. With the Jews it profoundly believed in an original revelation of God to men, which was now completed in the Incarnation of His Son and by the perpetual inspiration of the Holy

Spirit. It understood that it was the Word of God Who shone in the darkness of the old world and lighted every man coming into it. It was natural that some should consider Christianity too Judaic; it is natural that some should still in a kind of taunt ascribe many of its most patent features to Hellenism. S. Paul, who used Jewish Scriptures and Greek thought so freely, would not be careful to answer in such a matter. The Church was the true home of religion, Christ its true consummation: there was no need to say more. The ruling ideas of all who had sought after God came together, in their broken lights, in Him Who was truly more than they because He included and combined them all.

The disciple did not feel himself cut off from his past, but he felt a need to readjust all his old conceptions. His past principles, so far as they were good, must be true. What was their relation to the revelation of Christ? The great religious ideas are part of the inalienable inheritance of the human race. What is the meaning and value of each of them to the disciple of Jesus?

Probably, at the very first, there came forward to confront the disciple the question which belonged most intimately to all his past religious life. It is a question which must last, like such inquiries into the hidden things of God, till the end of time; recurring to every generation in a new or modified form, and only to receive an answer which expands in meaning as the ages draw in towards their final consummation. What

does *Sacrifice* mean? What did it mean to those who had been familiar all their lives with the idea? What does it mean to the Church, to us?

Perhaps it is impossible to combine in a single formula or definition all that the nations of old meant by sacrifice: certainly it is difficult for a Christian now to correlate all the different expressions of the idea except in the light of the revelation of Christ. And also it is certain that, among the Jews at least, like all other ideas that belonged to religion, it was progressive. But two characteristics it certainly has. It implies a gift to God, and it means more than an individual, it implies a corporate act. Man offers sacrifice because he is not alone in this world or in the world of the eternal, because he knows that he has a God above him, and because he is one of many brethren. Kinship and tribute stand together. Rabelais, thinking of quite different matters, has illuminated the idea of sacrifice when he says, "If we would attain a sure knowledge of Divine things there are two necessities for us—God's guidance and man's company."

Sacrifice is "the embodied prayer of men who think like children,"[1] and those who think like children are not far from the kingdom of heaven. It is the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual approach. No idea was so certain among the Jews; the heart of the giver as well as the acceptance of God

[1] Not in a disparaging sense, as Schultz, *Old Testament Theology*, i. 189, seems to write.

sanctified the gift—for the two, indeed, could not be separated. The slow development of Semitic ritual as it concerns sacrifice makes this more and more clear. In the history of the Hebrews we may trace the three offerings. First comes the peace offering, or thank offering, a common meal which admits one outside to the clan, and becomes a communion between Jehovah and His worshippers. Then the whole burnt offering, a gift made over entirely to God and entirely consumed: a recollection of the supreme Lordship of God, to Whom, in propitiation, an offering is made. Then that special form of sacrifice for sin, the sin offering, which came only with Leviticus, when the best, the unblemished, was entirely dedicated by death: an offering which must precede the burnt offering itself. Early and late, in history or prophecy, in spite of divergence and development, there is, though of course in very different proportions at different times, a sense of unity and a sense of surrender. Natural kinship is an expression, or reflection, of the kinship of man with God. So sacrifice begins as soon as men think of God: so it becomes an attempt at expiation so soon as they think of sin;[1] and "the notions of communion and atonement are bound up together."[2] Just in proportion as the holiness of God is known, the solemnity of the idea of sacrifice, of necessity, increases. Only

[1] Cf. Ch. Piepenberg, *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament*, pp. 54, 274. On Sacrifice, see Dr. Robertson Smith's article in the *Encycl. Brit.* and his *Religion of the Semites*, notably pp. 197, 247, 251, 262, 300–301, 303, 327, 331, 393, 395.

[2] *Religion of the Semites*, p. 302.

through the furnace of affliction do we at last reach—did the Jews at last reach—the full conception of the constant need of atonement, of a surrender whose cost meant the sanctification of the dearest and most beautiful things in the world that God made.

Other races strayed farther and farther away from this thought, which Israel, after the Exile, strove so eagerly to attain and embody. The blood that was sprinkled, the altar and the pillar, the development of the idea of worship, of sacrifice to a superior Being, the horrible invention of human sacrifice, the dying away of all sense of Divine protection, and its replacement by ideas solely of savage vengeance—all these are incidents in an immemorial history, in which the religious ideal sometimes advanced, but more often receded.[1] If atonement without sacrifice was impossible, sacrifice without atonement was a butchery and a blasphemy. Distortion and savagery culminate in the Arician priest-king, a grim figure prowling day and night in the sacred grove, carrying in his hand a drawn sword, and—

"Peering warily about him as if every instant he expected to be set upon by an enemy. He was a priest and a murderer, and the man for whom he looked was, sooner or later, to murder him, and hold the priesthood in his stead."[2]

What a contrast! Can the convert recognise any

[1] See Jevons's *Introduction to the History of Religion*, e.g. pp. 138, 141, 152, 161.

[2] Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, 2nd edition, vol. i. p. 2.

memory of these horrors in the beautiful words, "I am the Good Shepherd; the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep"? The coming of the Incarnate Son has set forth sacrifice in a new light. All that was inadequate, all that had become distorted, passed away; the root idea reached its full development. "Wherefore when He entereth into the world He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body didst Thou prepare for me. In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hadst no pleasure: Then said I, Lo, I am come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, Thy will." In those words the past is linked to the present of the disciple, and the great principle which lay at the root of all sacrifice is brought out in clear prominence of truth. The disciple of Christ takes the words of His prophetic psalmist, and he sees, hardly any longer in a glass darkly, the Only Begotten Son Who came in the fulness of time into the world. In Him the partial sacrifices find their completion: in themselves they were of no value: only they looked forward to the presentation of the ideal body of purity and perfection which was prepared. The prophecies of the holy books had written the will of God: and that, a known and certain thing, His Son was come to fulfil. Earthly sacrifice is at best imperfect; but there is an offering that is perfect and complete.

Now this was what the disciple of Christ knew, the moment he entered into the fold, chosen of God, elect and precious. He saw, with the writer of the Epistle

to the Hebrews, that the sacrifices could have no meaning save only in the light of the death of his Lord, and, with Paul of Tarsus, why it behoved the Christ to suffer, and how the offspring of God might not liken the Godhead to anything that had not the Love and the Righteousness that are eternal. He saw that in the life of Christ only could he learn what sacrifice meant.

1. It was a great fulfilment: the broken lights met, the purpose of Creation was at last accomplished. Dimly the old fathers had looked forward, not to transitory promises, but to a Divine completion of their sanctification. Kinship: the disciple felt that he was become, in a way that was awful and mysterious, a partaker of the Divine nature. Tribute: what his faltering heart and sinful hand offered trembling was presented now by One Who was the Perfect Man—and how much more!

2. But there is more than fulfilment or concentration of the old ideas. There is the imparting of a new, intensely practical, vital power. The doctrine of sacrifice, like all other doctrines to the Christian, is practical. It is also distinctively social. It is wholly coloured by the primary and inspiring conception of the Christian society, that we are members one of another and of Christ, heirs and joint-heirs with Christ, if we suffer with Him. Here was the great root idea of true religion, which the disciple found expanded and consummated. Nothing that is external to man can profit him—no sacrifices, offerings, worship, that do not

touch the heart and enter into the innermost soul. He must absorb truth till truth transforms him; and every ray of truth has its work, vivifying and enlightening, to do. Christ the Lord must be more than the disciple's example, He must be born within him, the vital principle of his life. So at once all that was external was turned into a new life within. "The Good Shepherd layeth down His life for the sheep;" and the body that was prepared for Him was prepared too, they might say, humbly and trembling though they might say it, for them. They were taken, as was said at the first of the saints of Southern Gaul, into the rank of the witnesses, the martyrs, of whom Jesus, He was the Prince.

So it was that, while He was still with them working, the Lord spoke so clearly of His Mission, that it was one that completed the old conception of sacrifice. He took the idea, and at once, in a double sense, made it personal. He was their Shepherd, they were His sheep: the close association of protection and fidelity. And for them He would lay down His life, in the body that ages of typical anticipation had prepared for Him.

Thus the disciple is brought face to face with the great mystery of the Atonement. It came to him not primarily as a theory, not primarily as a philosophic explanation of the phenomena of forgiveness, but as an historic fact. The atonement of Christ was the *great sacrifice*, the unique offering of perfect love and perfect submission, the tribute of the heart, and the consecration of the covenant of God with man. They could never

understand it fully—most true; but they could accept and welcome it, just because so clearly and certainly it completed their old religious life, completed the centuries of longing which the world had expressed in its sacrifices. They could understand it only as they came to realise it in their own lives. An external atonement—to this teaching they had been led up, and this teaching was now emphasised so that it could not be forgotten—an external atonement would not only be useless, it would be impossible.

So it was that Christ died. So it was that, far off from that unique Sacrifice, yet still truly, S. Paul died daily. So it was, in immeasurable humility of imitation, that every Christian offered to God the body which He had prepared, with all its wonderful history, all its passions and pains, all its powers, and all the merciful endowment that came from a loving Creator.

We can offer to God only what comes from Him; we can offer only what is already accepted in Him; we can offer only as united by every subtle bond of history and kinship to the Church which is the home of the faithful, the Kingdom of Heaven, the Body of the Lord. And all this is very direct in its appeal and authority. The completion of the disciple's life means an absolute offering to God. Without that you are none of His. The types and shadows have their ending only in His sacrifice: but that, for you, must be consummated in your own. The *singleness* of your aim, your *patient* following, your knowledge that you are in the world as God *sent* you, and solely to do what He designed and

go where His will shall show the way—all these, essential each in its way to the growth of your life in the Spirit, cannot be complete save in the *sacrifice* of all. And this, the disciple learns, does not mean only the cutting away here and there of things pleasant, the steadfast turning away from sin. These are but the rudiments, or at best the pedagogues, to bring us to Christ. It means that the whole man, the whole body, the whole soul, is given to God in Christ, after the fashion of Him Who only in the complete offering of body, soul, and spirit could give perfect obedience and win perfect conquest over sin.

Who is sufficient for these things? So the disciple of old must often have said: so, indeed, we often say to-day. It is only as he is one with Christ that any one is sufficient: only as he lives no longer, but Christ lives in him; as he sacrifices no longer, but Christ in him makes the sacrifice. For that wonderful truth then there comes, as the climax of God's help to man on earth, the visible sign of the Atonement, the pledge of the Divine fellowship, the greatest gift of inward and spiritual grace. How the Fathers clung to that perpetual memorial! How certain it made them that sacrifice was availing, that it had eternally availed: and so may it be still, we earnestly pray, with us:—

> "'Tis said, 'tis done; and like as we believe
> That He, true God, became for us true Man;
> As, clinging to the Cross, our souls receive
> The mystery of His redemptive plan;
> As we confess, 'He rose, and burst the tomb,—
> Went up on high,—will come to speak the Doom:'

So may we see the bright harmonious line
  Of all those marvels stretching on to *this*,
A kindred master-work of power Divine,
  That yields a foretaste of our Country's bliss,
When pilgrim hearts discern from earthly food
The quickening essence of His Flesh and Blood.

Wherefore we sinners, mindful of the love
  That bought us, once for all, on Calvary's Tree,
And having with us Him That pleads above,
  Do here present, do here spread forth to Thee
That only offering perfect in Thine eyes,
The one true, pure, immortal Sacrifice."[1]

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[1] The earlier verses of this most beautiful poem of the friend and master of so many of us, William Bright, Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Oxford, are not so well known as they well might be and as those made familiar by their use as a hymn. Yet they too are most impressive when sung, as I well remember from the day I heard them in the Eucharist on the Festival of the Epiphany 1901 in the Chapel of the Oxford Mission at Calcutta.

HISTORICAL COMMEMORATION

V

THE BLESSING OF KINGSHIP[1]

"We wait for Thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of Thy Temple."—Ps. xlviii. 8.

"WE wait for Thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of Thy Temple."

What words of comfort and strength, from the Psalms of Whit Sunday! God's miracles of help are not for a moment, not for a day however great and thrilling, but for all time. As of the Atonement on Calvary, so of the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. Once in time was the great act of love:

> "But what He never can repeat
> He shows forth day by day."

So year by year, in times of rejoicing or sorrow, we come humbly and gratefully before our God, to thank Him for that gift of inspiration to the Church from age to age, which is the security that our Lord will be with us, as He promised, to the end of the days. Century by century we repeat these words, please God, with fuller consciousness of their truth. "We wait

[1] Preached at S. Paul's on Whit Sunday 1910.

for Thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of Thy Temple." For, indeed, the Holy Spirit is the Maker of history for nations, as He is the Giver of life in the human soul.

It would be an idle affectation to speak to you of anything this morning that did not touch the thought that is in all our minds. Here in this House of God our interests are among the immortal things, righteousness and peace and love and joy in the Holy Ghost, and in our prayers that may link us to them. But this does not mean that we set aside the things of this mortal life; nay, rather it means, if we are Christians in any true sense, that we take the things among which we live, the thronging interests of each day, and lay them before God, to be hallowed or pardoned, to be uplifted into the Divine atmosphere where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. And now, when there has come, so suddenly, a sharp blow across our national life,[1] it is impossible to think of anything else but that swift severance of soul from body that has taken our King before the judgment-seat of God. And we think of it as in the sight of Him from Whom all nations have their blessing or their condemnation, after Whom all the families of the earth are named, and in Whom we every one of us live and move and have our being. Truly on Whit Sunday a nation in mourning may say, "We wait for Thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of Thy Temple."

[1] King Edward VII. died, to the grief of his whole people, May 6, 1910.

Less and less, it may be, will men come to count national history by the reigns of kings; but yet it is still so with us that we look to one chief figure as though very much of our national life centred in it. Even while we think of the terrible disaster at Whitehaven, which has shattered the happiness of many families, our thoughts turn back to that one Family in which, as they have so often been the centre of national rejoicing, now there seems to be gathered together the sorrow of us all.

The throne is still full of deep meaning for Englishmen. It is the visible symbol of our unity. It is the standing memorial of the continuity of our island history. The throne means to us something that we can hardly put in words, and yet that we feel to be real, almost tangible, an embodiment of traditions of duty, of service, of loyalties, of sacrifices, of consecration in the name of God.

And he who has passed from us knew this well. When he chose his own name as King, it was not the name of a beloved father of strenuous goodness and entire absorption in high ideals of public service, but the name which, above all others, recalls the chequered course of our national development, the name that joins the England of the far past to the England of to-day. A long procession, those kings of times far away pass before us when we name the King who is gone. Edward the Elder, whom the warring tribes of different races came to take "for father and lord"; Edward the Martyr, the murdered boy, who was ranked among the

English saints; Edward the Confessor, who stood at the parting of the ways, and had the wisdom that seemed weakness while he lived, yet which men knew when a century had gone to have been true foresight, the wisdom which saw that England needed the vigour of a new race; and so men looked back to his times and his laws as if they were of gold. Then Edward the greatest and best of all our kings, pure and true, the "creator of Parliaments, the definer of jurisdictions, the founder of the foreign policy of England"; then the Edward who first departed from the tradition of toil that belonged to his predecessors, who was content to be an idler and an agriculturist, and to betray the trust that men gave to him as his father's son. Edward again, warrior and claimant of splendid fame, but unscrupulous and ostentatious, whom England, said one of his subjects,[1] blushed to have for King, and whose people fled at his approach, who died miserably, as so often a voluptuary dies, and deserted by the very companions of his pleasures. Then Edward, the popular King, but popular because he set before his people no example of high endeavour, and who left, for all that he had twice won his crown by his sword, no memory that men honoured or loved; his son, the child Edward, who passed to an unknown death, the victim of men's relentless pursuit of power in an age when every natural goodness seemed to have been stifled by years of civil war; and Edward the cold, solitary boy, puppet of selfish statesmen, whom men pitied but could not

[1] Possibly, but not probably, Simon Islip, Archbishop of Canterbury.

love. What a line of names epitomising England's story! And last was to come one, the heir of many lines of ancient day, English and Scottish and of foreign blood, who chose for himself as king the name to which such vivid, though distant, memories cling.

Nine years ago the greatest English historian of the nineteenth century summed up the reign that was then ended in words of "sorrow and hope, happy memories and great anticipations." He prayed for "a sevenfold blessing on a seventh Edward."[1]

How God has answered that prayer we cannot say to-day. Centuries hereafter will judge for us as we can not. But we know how certainly, and how steadfastly, our King set before himself an ideal of public duty, of sympathy, of unwearied work, and how he carried it into practice to the very last day of his life. We know that he possessed in a very remarkable degree the gifts of tact and sagacity and insight, and that he devoted them without stint to the service of his country. We know that in his share of National Government he was a model of what a constitutional sovereign should be. It is centuries since we had a King so universally popular. Perhaps we never have had. And if we never have had a King who more certainly strove to do his duty, never have we had one who more truly and more wisely was an English patriot to the core.

[1] The sermon preached by William Stubbs, Bishop of Oxford, in S. George's Chapel, Windsor, in the presence of a great assemblage of sovereigns and princes, on the Sunday after the funeral of Queen Victoria.

But this is no time for eulogy, however sincere. Let us rather be silent and humble in the presence of death. Let us give no praise to our dead King that is perhaps but a subtly disguised praise of our own people, of ourselves. Yet, let us, in humility and submission to the unerring judgment, remember him before God as one who had, in the fine words of a foreign diplomatist, "an instinct for peace," and who did, as one of our own statesmen has told us, "a great work not only for his country but for the peace and goodwill of the world." On the tomb of Edward I. are these noble words which he made the motto of his life: *Pactum serva:* keep the bond. Might not men write on the tomb of Edward VII.—"He kept peace"?

And, indeed, could we desire for any man a higher achievement than that he should be the instrument through whom "God shall give His people the blessing of peace"? With that blessing, so ancient and hallowed among Christians, may God give him rest.

As we pray, on this Whit Sunday, we look back and we look forward in the faith of the Holy Ghost. We think that Edward VII. was worthy to be the King of a free people. We know that the heritage of love and trust, which the long years of devotion, and the incomparable judgment of his Mother, had won from all our Empire, descended upon him. From him it will go on to his son who is our King to-day, to whom the whole nation—the whole Empire—gives its full sympathy and its full trust. God save King George!

Surely the ancient promise was given to Queen

Victoria, and surely it is not given in vain: "The children of Thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall stand fast in Thy sight."

Truly on every Whit Sunday is that promise renewed to us. Believing the promise, relying on the gift, we bring our new King in our prayers before the Throne of God. The blessing that has been with us, will be with us still. "We wait for Thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of Thy Temple."

VI

WORSHIP AND CONSECRATION

"As for me, in the multitude of Thy lovingkindness will I come into Thy house: in Thy fear will I worship toward Thy holy temple."—Ps. v. 7.

AS you go through life with your eyes open, as experience makes you understand more and more of what life is, you see that men with whom you have to deal, if they are closely examined, tend to fall into two classes. There are those who look at the world from an eager, practical standing-point, who see things —and insensibly more and more so see them as they go on in life—according as they affect themselves. There is something to be done: let us do it. There is something to be understood: let us learn it. And, if need be, there is something to be suffered: let us endure it. But there the view closes. The man seems to have taken for his motto, in the narrowest interpretation he can put on the words, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." He does not want to see beyond the limits of what he has to do, of what mankind has to do. There is so much to be done that he can see, that he has no time to look into the background of life. Such is the view of a growing

number of men to-day. Life is so extraordinarily rich in interests that even to see them superficially seems enough. And equally for that great class of men who are ceaselessly busy with routine work, for whom one day is exactly like another, whose life never widens and whose interests never expand, there seems no call for explanation, no sense of anything above or beyond. Fine, strong, energetic people many of these: practical, devoted, effective, perhaps self-sacrificing. But how is it possible, one thinks with a shock of astonishment now and then, to imagine them elsewhere than in this life: there is not a thought, not a glimpse, in them of a life beyond. But with others the world is quite different. Behind the keenness of its struggles, behind the absorbing insistence of its demands, there is something none the less real because it is mysterious, something which lies at the background of all thought, that is hidden when we live hastily and hurriedly, but has for us, there out of the darkness, its explanation of all the facts of life. It is through men who think and feel like this that God sends to us the messages of His revelation, that He tells us "the things concerning Himself."

At this season of the Christian year, when the chief facts of the life of our Lord have been commemorated and the climax of Christian teaching is reached on Trinity Sunday, the Church of Christ calls us to remember that it is not the things seen most clearly, most directly, not the men who are ready to deal most confidently with problems which beset

the world most obviously to-day—not those things, not those men, which belong to Eternity.

"That low man goes on adding one to one,
His hundred's soon hit;
This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses an unit.

That, has the world here—should he need the next,
Let the world mind him!
This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed
Seeking shall find him."

So Browning in those once-hackneyed words that sound so old-fashioned in the twentieth century, but will come again to men's hearts, as Shakespeare has come.

And so our Church told us on Trinity Sunday to say that wonderful hymn of faith, a veritable creed of the difficult days at the beginning of the sixth century, built up on the results of the controversies of the centuries before, and embodying their decisions, that creed and hymn of praise which puts right action and true belief together, which declares that they that have done good will go into life everlasting, and that for him that would be saved before all things it is needful that he hold fast the Catholic faith. What really is at the root of all enduring work is a belief in something beyond, a wondering insight into the mystery that surrounds the world, the mystery that belongs to the power, and the being, of Almighty God.

It is with that thought that on great days of life, personal and national, we bring our work, to be

hallowed, before God. In this year we may boldly, and very solemnly, make the claim that Englishmen have had that great thought for centuries in their minds. It was a great Englishman who, when he was consecrated on Trinity Sunday to be primate of all England, nearly seven centuries and a half ago, set the day apart to be observed in perpetual remembrance and thankfulness for the mystery of the being of Almighty God, the "Strength and Star upholding all creation," the Holy Trinity in Unity. This sense of the mystery behind the world we see has set its mark on the lives of almost every one of our great men: great soldiers, and sailors, and statesmen—and, as I am reminded to-day by the presence in our town [1] of some who specially honour his memory, very notably on the life of that typically great Englishman—not great in action but in speech, and thought, and character, Dr. Johnson, of whom his famous biographer says "that amidst all his constitutional infirmities, his earnestness to conform his practice to the precepts of Christianity was unceasing, and that he habitually endeavoured to submit every transaction of his life to the will of the Supreme Being." Reverence and solemn awe were at the very root of his life. "Men like this," says Lord Rosebery, how truly, "are the stay of religion in their time, and for those who come after." And the thought which inspired them has, I believe,

[1] Preached in Burford Church, Oxfordshire, June 18, 1911. The Johnson Club had met in the town the night before, and many of its members were in church.

been the true foundation of all that is best in our national life and our national character.

It is not fanciful, I think, to see here a striking contrast. The character of French life and thought it is to try to make abstractions visible and concrete, to make spiritual things actual and active: an outward presentment in memorial, or in ceremony, is sought for of the deepest mysteries and the most difficult ideas. So it was in the great French Revolution, when each acceptance of a new religion or a new political theory had its embodiment in some outward show. And though the inevitable reaction has come in an extreme materialism, so it is, in countless if less noticeable ways, still. But in England we have had always a longing to idealise our commonest actions, to spiritualise the most ordinary doings of life. We make a new building, and we call God's benediction on it and its use; we bless the new flag of a regiment, and send a ship out to sea for the first time with prayers.

And now we are coming, in the week that begins to-day, again to the climax of recognition of this national thought. With many of the very forms that were used for the hallowing of English kings twelve hundred years ago,[1]—the same prayers, the same Coronation Oath,—we crown the successor of a long line of rulers and servants of the people. It should mean to us something almost immeasurably great. We go to God with all our national life, all our needs and activities and policies and aims, all our successes and

[1] See the *Pontifical of Egbert*, 760.

all our our sins, and lay them, in that person of our representative, at His feet, for pardon, for blessing, for inspiration. We look back over the long past, shadowed yet glorious, and say, "In the multitude of Thy lovingkindness will I come into Thine house." We look forward to the unknown future, and through the turmoil and pressure of to-day to the mystery behind our life, and say, "In Thy fear will I worship toward Thy holy temple." That is what we mean when we say that we believe in God in History: we believe that He has brought us into being, made us what we are by an age-long process of growth, and training, and purification: that He is always watching over us: that our life is not separate from His, but has its being solely in Him; and that living reaches its highest only when we know this, when we know that we came from God and go to God, and that at every moment of our existence He holds us in the hollow of His hand. So, with prayer, and humiliation, and thankfulness, we bring our King to be crowned.

We mean more than this. We mean that we cannot separate the natural from the supernatural, the seen from the unseen, the world of sense from the world of spirit. Very long ago S. Augustine said, "Miracle is not contrary to Nature, but only to what is known of Nature"; and we need to say it still. We believe in the unity of Knowledge and the unity of Life. We believe that what we see now is not all: we look back into history and we *know* it is not: we know what men have been, and done, and seen, and we

are certain that there is behind it all the spiritual force of a Living and Eternal God.

It is quite impossible to go through life, we feel, without being sure that now we see only as in a glass darkly: and know only in part: but we believe that *then*—when we are face to face—we shall know even as we are known.

And so, last and greatest of all, we sum up our faith in the words of ancient days. We say it again this year with redoubled force: we shall say it four days hence with the deepest solemnity of offering and consecration. We mean at the heart of our life, and by our presence in the house of God, that the Catholic faith, the faith of the Universal Church in all ages, is not mere doing, though man do the very best and noblest that his powers can compass: not mere believing, though truly to believe in Jesus Christ is the very crown of life on earth for every human soul: but worship, the awe of prayer and thanksgiving and sacrifice, the lifting up of hand and heart toward God, the Unseen but the true Reality, the Maker and Giver of every good thing: not doing only, or believing only, is the Catholic faith: but "the Catholic faith is this: that we *worship* one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity." "As for me, in the multitude of Thy lovingkindness will I come into Thy house: in Thy fear will I worship toward Thy holy temple."

VII

KING EDWARD CONFESSOR[1]

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?"—S. MATT. v. 13.

STILL we study those wonderful words which come to us from the far centuries and the Galilean hillside. So simple they are, when first we read them, that every child may understand; so direct in their teaching, so sonorous in their appeal, so incisive in their criticism, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, the words verily of One Who discerns the thoughts and intents and issues of the heart. Yet, as we ponder, their meaning grows deeper; they elude us when we think that we have tied them down to one explanation only of life, one direction only for action, one key only that can be used to unlock every door of difficulty. Truly the words of Prophets are as goads, and here was the greatest of Prophets. Can we say more? Does it not mean that we must fit them ourselves to the interpretation of life? Do they not all make their

[1] Preached at Westminster Abbey on the Festival of the Translation of King Edward the Confessor, 1910.

demand to that individual decision, that private judgment, which is the responsibility that God has thrown on man? Jesus Christ was One in the long line of God's Prophets, though He was much more. Other Prophets before and after Him spoke God's message, and ever it has been for man to accept or to reject, to hear or to forbear. Eyes can be shut and ears closed. It was this that was revealed to Isaiah, "because he saw His glory: and he spake of Him."[1]

Here to-day you commemorate Edward King of England and Confessor of Jesus Christ, the founder of this your great Abbey, which of all other churches in this land Englishmen have come to call their own. And Edward is worthy of your commemoration, of national commemoration too. It is time that the tale of his career, so often misunderstood, should be told again, but this is not the place to tell it. Only this let us say: his was no life of mere simplicity, of sanctity without prescience, of childishness without guile, no tragedy of inadequacy, no defeasance of power, no weakness that knew not what policy was best in time of stress. He was, like so many of his successors, keen in the hunting-field, but also he could lead an army—as in 1051 and 1052—and bring the proudest of his earls to his feet.[2] He gathered a fleet worthy of the old sea-kings. He was diligent in

[1] Isaiah vi.; S. John xii. 41.

[2] See the Chronicles of Worcester and Peterborough, *sub annis*, and Mr. Freeman's account of the crises—biassed in favour of Godwine as it is.

prayer and in the public worship of God, a patron of clergy and yet their critic, and alive to all the fresh ideas that were active beyond his island realm. The "new style" of this very church when he built it is a witness to the fact.[1] He made such firm peace in his land, even in the midst of civil strife, that men looked back to his rule for centuries, and, though he was no lawgiver, demanded again and again "the laws of good King Edward." On the foundation of those laws, which yet were not really his own creation but those by which he governed, William I. and Henry I. laid their superstructure, and on Henry's charter, which claimed to follow the principles of Edward's rule, the best parts of Magna Carta itself were based.

But most of all he was—and that is why, if I mistake not, he is still remembered to-day—a true prophet, one who saw events with real insight, who judged tendencies, anticipated dangers, saw evils and knew the remedy, warned and exhorted as a true king should. If Alfred was wise and good for his own day, and a truth-teller whom every age may reverence, if Edgar kept good peace, and Harold made a last fight for English freedom, yet we may not wonder that, while their dust is scattered to the winds, the body of Edward still rests in the shrine most honoured in all our land. It is something of a parable that Waltham was rebuilt from the foundations by the grandson of

[1] William of Malmesbury ; and cf. Rivoira, *Lombardic Architecture*, ii. 148.

the Norman Conqueror's daughter, while here at Westminster you have in place some of the very stones that were set there by the last king of Cerdic's line. It is not strange, as at first it might appear, but it is of the highest significance, that when a foreign line was reigning in England the last king of the old English royal race should be canonised as a Saint. Men had come to recognise him for what he was. For indeed he saw what England needed in his day; and though, while he lived, not many men knew that he was right, after his death, as the centuries brought the knowledge of experience, England came to see that his was the prescience of the true statesman, the true father of his people. For indeed in his time England was sick to death. It was sick of the deadly disease of insular self-satisfaction. It rejoiced in that equanimity to which Thomas Carlyle gave an epithet as discourteous as deserved. The little strifes of parties, the local jealousies of North and South and Midland, preyed upon the vitals of national life. The people were not, as Alfred and Edgar and Dunstan and Cnut had tried to make them, citizens of a united England, but men of Mercia and Northumbria and Wessex. The old laws survived and stereotyped separation; the races stood apart ever ready to fight among themselves; the nearest approach to a national policy that the boldest of the English leaders could put forth was not "England for the English," but "England for the West Saxons." Splendid was the strength of the old English character, the character that speaks in the

mythical Beowulf, or Cædmon the herdsman poet, or Alfred the King; truly when Rome was sunk in the degradation led by evil women and evil Popes, and the courts of the Franks and Vandals were but slaughter-houses, England had been the very salt of the earth; but that was a century ago and more, and now—the salt had lost its savour, wherewith should it be seasoned?

England was quiescent and saw not, saw no present decay nor coming doom. But Edward saw. In vain he had sent an Earl from the South to rule in the North, and another in the Midlands, to weld, if it might be, the whole land into one. Old forces of disunion and self-sufficiency were too strong for him. Then he knew that a breath of revivifying inspiration must come from oversea. He sought for foreign Bishops who knew the learning of the day, and who lived lives of stern self-restraint, which the English clergy had too often laid aside. He brought in foreign nobles. Even he was prepared, there seems reason to believe, if all other efforts failed, to let William the Norman come as his heir and supply the stimulus which should wake the dry bones to life. Not Godwine or Harold, not the English clergy or the English people, saw truly into the future or knew the needs of their own land. Edward knew, and he braved the unpopularity which comes always to the man who will not prophesy smooth things, will not listen for the voice of the majority or the voice of those who seem to be the strongest, and follow it.

The time was out of joint; Edward was the only man in England who knew how it must be set right. If he could have had his way, if the people would have listened to him, the land might have had all the benefits of the new ideas that were transforming Europe, without paying for them in rapine and blood. We might have had the gifts of the Normans without the Norman Conquest. This is no fantastic claim for him: it is a fact which the history of the next century proves beyond demur. From the Norman rule came new life to England, new power in statesman, new courage in soldier, new devotion in priest. Out of chaos came order, and out of order rose that magnificent fabric of just government which was the glory of our land even in the Middle Age. Edward was true prophet, and thus he was true King. What matter if he failed to convince? Time proved him right, and when men looked back to the days of Good King Edward, or kings gloried to complete in his honour the shrine that he had made, they gave that only tribute which is the lot of nearly all those who see beyond the gaze of their contemporaries and dream dreams which it takes generations to embody in reality and success.

And so Edward Confessor should be remembered to-day; for the danger which he saw and for which, though ineffectually, he was the first to suggest a remedy, is still the pressing danger of English life. It is complacency, punctuated now and again by panic, but always returning to be the natural expression of

men's common thought. The tyranny of "the man in the street," the dread of the expert opinion, the delight in compromise, the ignorant conservatism which is but another name for lethargy, intellectual complacency, or moral, or economic, or literary, or political—they are all the same symptom. They represent what the Englishman feels when he is undisturbed. To-day it may be that we need in literature the voice from the uncontaminated air of our country highlands to give us new ideals; that in economics a voice from the Ghetto may plead with us for righteousness; that in morals the Church will at last be heard in unison, speaking of temperance and judgment to come. But always the answer is uncertain; always it is the witness, however it is received, that counts.

That, I take it, is the abiding memory represented in this place. Here we may not forget how in defiance of popular feeling it was that Burke passionately pleaded for the wisdom of generosity towards America, that Wesley proclaimed the infinite value of one single human soul, that Wilberforce demanded the emancipation of the slave and Shaftesbury the Christian treatment of the worker who made England's wealth. Many a time would popular opinion have stamped out unselfish philanthropy and religious enthusiasm in the past—in 1800, or 1840, or 1870; it would have stamped out common justice of man to man; you may read the lesson in Disraeli's *Sybil*, in Mrs. Gaskell's *North and South*, or, still nearer to us in place and time, in the Life of Bryan King. Vested interests of corruption,

—those motionless sentinels of national lethargy,—close-knit ties of trade or class, the satiety of success which only seeks to be left undisturbed, the fascinating entanglements of luxury, the stupid indifference to the progress of thought—in one word, the dread of novelty, the dread of ideas—all that is written deep into the history of England. The golden age of England was the age when ideas swept in riotous, bracing turbulence across the current of life—the age of Elizabeth, before the dead hand of Puritanism was laid upon them or the smothering hedonism of the later Stewarts. Again the weight of commonplace satisfaction that comes from successful commerce or successful war, that stifles religion and banishes originality of thought, descended upon us. Splendid were the achievements of Victoria's reign, splendid the victories in the region of material things, and above them shines the glory of that most noble, unselfish, devoted life of Mother and Queen. But is not the danger still with us? Has the salt still its savour? Does the individual, does the nation, listen for the voice of the prophet and, when it hears, obey? There are unlovely types enough among us, types that the England of the Confessor knew in Church and State. Still there are men who listen for the voice of the successful classes, not for the sound of the trump of God. Is the race dead of those who, in matters of religion, always know what the partisan is saying, and intensely admire it; of those who are seriously afraid of seeming to have a clerical mind, which, after all, in clerical matters is no more than an

expert judgment; of those who glorify the common ignorance of the average man; of those who are always ready to show that great statesmen are right and humble ecclesiastics are wrong? In the State has the line ended of those who feel that the Church should not attempt to dictate on moral questions or arouse the individual conscience as to private sin or public wrong? Do politicians always vote according to their convictions, or are they ready to follow the majority when in their hearts they are convinced that it is wrong? We may hope that under all that is ugly in the outward show of our life, the "sober, strong spirit of the country," though it be "unfortunately not a prescient one, not an attractively lovable, albeit of a righteous benevolence, labours on, doing the hourly duties for the sake of conscience, little for prospective security, little to win affection."[1] That this is so is the witness of the last of our great writers, the keenest of our critics. But also he did not allow us to forget how self-complacency sits like a pall on English life, "the genius of our comfortable sluggishness."[2] The people love to have it so; the successful newspapers are those which "show it nothing but the likeness of its dull animal face."[3] All through it is the same. If, as he says, "a coronet steadies the brain," one might add that even a seat in a municipal council has been found a sedative panacea for originality of thought. There descends too often upon us all the somnolent ease of self-sufficiency. It

[1] George Meredith, *Celt and Saxon*, p. 225.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 226. [3] *Ibid.* p. 235.

may be only a slumber; indeed, we who believe in England's vital force are certain that it is. And yet let us not forget that only those nations which have kept awake have been able to survive. The readiness is all.

So Edward knew when God called him to Himself. The last Easter of his life he knew that the time of awakening was at hand. The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus had turned in their grave, in the allegory of legend.[1] Edward told his vision, but men said that he knew from God that no one would heed his call to repentance. Bishops, prelates, priests no longer sought to be good shepherds; they sought not to feed, but to sell. Princes and earls and barons sought only vain glory; they cared only to oppress the poor. So says the poetical biographer in the language of a later day.[2] In the last hours of Edward there was not wanting a priest (indeed he was an archbishop) to tell the strong earl whose hand was stretched out towards the Crown that the visions and warnings were only the incoherences of a dying man. But also the King knew that God was with him. It had been revealed to him in the Sacrament of Divine Love. Jesus had bent towards him as towards the knight in that wonderful picture of Burne-Jones. "This is Jesus in Whom I believe."[3] So turns back the eye to the Great Prophet of Galilee, Who has visited His people and Who visits them again and again in warning till He

[1] *Life of Edw. Conf. from Aelred*, lines 3341 *sqq.*
[2] *Ibid.* lines 3732 *sqq.* [3] *Ibid.* line 2355.

visit them to judge. The commemoration of a saintly King who was one of God's prophets will avail us little unless we listen in humility for the Voice which he heard and watch for the Holy Face which he saw. Truly, as the ages go on, we believe that God is reconciling all things to Himself in the faith of Jesus Christ. Thus only can we, if we think deeply of life, stand boldly and wait for that which is to come. Pray we for insight that we may know whither God would have us go; pray we for courage that we may not fear or flatter the face of man; pray we most of all that in us the salt may not lose its savour, and we may offer with unclouded hearts the devotion of obedience, single-eyed and sincere.

VIII

SHAKESPEARE[1]

"Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off" (*or*, "they shall behold a far-stretching land, a land of far distances").—Isa. xxxiii. 17.

IT is the vision promised to the man who in conspicuous truthfulness of heart gives himself to do his task in the world as God set it; and it is the vision which we associate in our minds with the fit benediction of true poetry. The land of far distances, the beautiful stretching plain that we see from some high mountain top, the distant summits, the snowcapped peaks touched with the rosy hues of dawn: that is the vision which comes to the poet's eye: and to us who call on God in Christ it is summed up, the highest thought of beauty, in the sight of God Himself. Long the vision may remain unheeded, long indistinct, but at last, to the true man, we do not doubt that it will come truly. "Thine eyes shall see the King in His Beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off."

Truly, God's world, the living dress of the Godhead, as Goethe calls it, is an illimitable vision, a vision, to

[1] A Shakespeare Sermon for Stratford-on-Avon, April 24, 1904.

him who sees, of exhaustless beauty, and at last a vision eternal, the sight of God Himself.

Years ago I heard the greatest English historian of the nineteenth century say, "A broad line is drawn across the history of the world by the birth of Christ." It is a truth that stands out in our thoughts to-day. New life, new virtue, new holiness, came to birth with Jesus the Son of Mary, and that dividing line is a separation which cannot be concealed, between the poets of old time and the poets of the Christian age. The beauty and the dignity of the old classics,—we should be unworthy of God's gifts if we neglected them; but none the less every true critic knows that there is a new spirit, a new vital force, in the words of those who have lived and sung since Christ first came on earth. Take the four greatest names of all, and you see that in them the Christian touch is emphatic and unmistakable: two of them are conspicuously, triumphantly, Christian, living only in the breath of God's presence, delighting to sing His praise above all earthly things, filled with the joy of His countenance, which is Life from the dead:—Dante, the seer of the worlds beyond our sight; and the seer of the world of men as God moves among them transforming by the miracles of His grace, Calderón. One only of the four we might even fancy to be Pagan, Goethe: and no one can study him in seriousness without seeing how profoundly he was influenced by Christian ideals. From that moment when, as he tells us, he felt the hollowness of the conventional confession of sin to the old Lutheran

minister before his confirmation, he never entirely shook himself free from that great overmastering claim of God, transcending far all those classic models that he followed, speaking clear above the passions that beset his course. If Goethe was not a Christian in the full knowledge of Christ, yet his work would have been impossible in any atmosphere that was not charged with the Spirit of the Lord. And our own Shakespeare, the man whom among all poets and thinkers we love best, what shall we say of him? Why, surely, that as he knew man and the world as God made them, so he knew God too, in spite of fall and frailty, in simple faith and trust.

The vision of Truth as it is given to the poet is in its essence the vision of the Beauty of Goodness, the sight of the King in His Beauty.

To some it may come in the child's love and trust, as they lisp in numbers the love of the Father Who loves. That untouched innocence of devotion is a gift rare and beautiful indeed.

> "Esce di mano a lui, che la vagheggia
> Prima che sia, a guisa di fanciulla
> Che piangendo e ridendo pargoleggia
> L'anima semplicetta, che sa nulla,
> Salvo che, mosso da lieto fattore,
> Volentier torna a ciò che la trastulla."[1]

"Blessed are the pure in heart," we say, "for they shall see God." Yet as we say the beatitude with

[1] Dante, *Purgatorio*, c. xvi.

that thought of innocence in our minds, we do not see all the meaning of our Lord's words; for indeed He did not restrict that blessing to the bright souls who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, but He spoke of all those who are struggling towards the light, struggling through failure, often it may be, and clouded by sin, yet struggling with a simple aim, a single heart. Blessed are the single-minded: those who have one pure aim, to follow and to live in, by God's grace, by persistent effort, the way of truth. "Blessed are the single-minded; for they, though as yet they may be far from seeing God, though as yet they may not believe a single article of the Christian Creed, yet at last shall attain the perfect vision; yes, as surely as God is true, they shall be satisfied in their every capacity for truth and beauty and goodness; they shall behold God."[1]

So for the true poet, as for the true man, our Wordsworth tells,

> "the light of love
> Not failing, perseverance from his steps
> Departing not, he shall at length obtain
> The glorious habit by which sense is made
> Subservient still to moral purposes,
> Auxiliar to divine."[2]

It seems to us as we stand here to-day, where the poetry of England is consecrated in the resting-place of her greatest son, that this gift of the dawning vision

[1] Gore, *The Sermon on the Mount*, p. 41.
[2] Wordsworth, *Despondency*, ed. 1849, p. 196.

comes often to true men in middle age. So Dante, "midway upon the journey of his life," was brought by the guidance of the poet of old Rome from the "selva selveggia ed aspra e forte," the savage forest, rough and stern, to the wonder of the land of far distances. Alone he goes, the poet of the medieval Church, into a country where no explorers have forced their way, free, fearless, self-reliant, yet humble in dependence on the protecting hand of God; and he speaks, to those who live the life that is a race towards death,[1] of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come—the lesson which is of an age with the world men live in, the lesson which we still learn from the verse of Dante as we learn it from the Book of God. At first he may seem to write only for the wise and those who have high thoughts and lofty powers, but in truth he does far more. As in his own day the blacksmith sang his lines at the forge, so still he speaks in lessons that can be understood even by the humble and dull. Great in tragic force, in the true sublimity which belongs to moral judgment, stern with the voice of Divine justice, he speaks always as a man to men, as one who has known how we are tempted and what we suffer, and has come through the strenuous pursuit of the Divine vision at last to the crown and mitre of his humanity, the true judgment which comes from the sight of the King in His Beauty,

[1] "Sì le insegna a' vivi
Del viver ch'è un correre alla morte."
Purgatorio, xxxiii. 54.

the beholding of the land that—for so many of us—is still very far off.

"Now hast thou judgment found
Free and upright and sound."[1]

Through the wild forest of sin, through the dark valley of punishment, through the loving discipline of purification, he has passed; and he stands in freedom, with human soul strengthened by God's dealing in grace, pure and determined to look forth on the world with single eye, to accept with faithful happiness whatever of sorrow or of struggle God has it in His Divine purpose to bestow. The human soul, purged of self-seeking, rests simply in the Hand of God. Truly, we say to the great Florentine as we leave him: "Thine eyes shall see the King in His Beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off."

God leads men by divers ways to see the vision of Himself: not by one road can men come to the great secret, is the profound thought of a distant age.

"Uno itinere non potest perveniri ad tam grande secretum."

Our Shakespeare came, we think, by a rough way, in which he learned, as no other ever learned, all that the world and human nature have to tell. Dante was a scholar, a traveller, an aristocrat, a philosopher,

[1] *Purgatorio*, xxvii. (Dr. C. L. Shadwell's version):—

"Libero, dritto e sano è tuo arbitrio
E fallo fora non fare a suo senno;
Perch'io te sopra te corono e mitrio."

a politician, a theologian, and through all the wonders of the world he saw the harmony in "the Divine Science, full of all peace." The mind of Shakespeare was a mirror in which every human interest was reflected; but the simile must not make us forget that there was no interest of human life which left him unmoved. Where he saw, he entered: no door was closed to him: sin stained him in youth, and he knew the power,—yes, we must not shame to say it,—he knew the fascination of the temptations, open or subtle, of world and flesh and devil. No one could write as he wrote, who did not know that Satan's snares are no playthings for men or women, but sharp instruments which slay souls. No man could write as he, who had not learnt both the pathos of suffering but the true tragedy of sin. Yet as we think of him to-day we should do ill indeed to ascribe to him faults and vices that only critics' imaginations, the talk of gossips of his own time or in ours, lay on him. Only we know that we cannot claim for him a spotless life: we think of him in his youth and manhood in his own words: "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues."

Side by side, in his work, with the attraction of evil, we see also the supreme attractiveness of good. When he was in the midst of the rich life of Elizabethan London, when he painted vice and sin without passing

by the real allurements that they have, he saw with unclouded vision the nobility of courage and honour and loyalty and truth, the grandeur of simple goodness, the beauty of self-sacrifice and pure love.

And as the years went on he turned more decisively to the simplicity which is at the root of all goodness. Was not that sonnet written while he still lived in the centre of the brightest intellectual movement England has ever known—in which he looks beyond the heyday of life to the death which awaits, and sees that to live truly the soul must deny the claims of flesh ?—

"Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
Fool'd by those rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within, and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay ?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend ?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge ? Is this thy body's end ?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store,
By terms divine in selling hours of dross :
Within be fed, without be rich no more :
So shalt thou feed on death, that feeds of men,
And, death once dead, there's no more dying then."

Thus, while he still lived busily among men and taught in the theatre, the greatest teacher of his age, the lesson that men would learn from him was the lesson which men learnt from Newman sixty years ago. Go through life with clear vision, see without shame or fear what the world has to show, and you will see, above its crimes and wrongs, how

true it is that, "if there be no God and no future state, yet even then it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than to be a coward." Then came the middle of the life's journey—

> "That time of year thou mayst in me behold,
> When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
> Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
> Bare, ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
> In me thou see'st the twilight of such day,
> As after sunset, fadeth in the west,
> Which by and by black night doth take away,
> Death's second self, that seals up all in rest."

Then the heart turned back to the love it had never lost, to the great trees and shady lanes of Warwickshire, to the soft murmuring streams, the flight of birds across the fields at evening, the simplicity of kindly country folk, the love of wife and home. These he remembered, and to these he went back. Not hardened by the sin and suffering he had seen, not turned from faith by the wavering of theologians, finding still in the faith of Catholic Christendom as England was reiterating it the strength and stay of life and action among men, he came back to the sweet land he had never ceased to love.

Did he say, we wonder, the words he gave to the English hero whom he loved most?—

> "The tide of blood in me
> Hath proudly flowed in vanity till now:
> Now doth it turn and ebb back to the sea,
> Where it shall mingle with the state of floods,
> And flow henceforth in formal majesty."

Did he come with thoughts of dark remorse? I do not think so. There is no trace, in the solemn beauty of his later plays, of any such blots upon the sun of God's mercy. With repentance he came, like all true men, I do not doubt,—the repentance which comes from seeing life truly as the sun sets on it, the repentance which comes from loyalty to the vision which God has given, loyalty in spite of failures and falls, loyalty to the single aim to do right and speak truth. Be faithful in receiving the light God has given, and He gives more: that, we cannot fail to believe, was the experience of our greatest Englishman.

And then there sounded forth from the life the deep, strong note which had always been heard at the base of all the harmony, the note of firm trust in immortality and God. We may repeat to-day the words of that cultivated and beautiful teacher who has passed since last year into rest, words spoken eight years ago in this church: "We are the better and wiser because [Shakespeare] was faithful to great truths which God commissioned him to speak."[1]

There was no sharp severance in our poet's life: it passed from age to age in quiet harmony. No man whose heart had not been set on things noble and pure would leave the busy, turbid London life to come down here to the quiet resting-place of home and wife and children, and there still to write for the stage,

[1] "A Poet's Responsibility," by the late Canon Ainger, in *Shakespeare Sermons*, p. 53.

to provide still things lovely and of good report to be given life and power by the glorious art of the actor, "to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." His life, whatever its errors and sins, was still of one piece: like the poet of our day who loved him, he need not fear to lay his *Cymbeline* on his death-bed before God.

For us poor men and women of an hour, whom the Master has given tasks to do for Him while it is still day, let there be no slackness and no fear, when we pray here where our Shakespeare was laid at rest. Time has for us as for him the same lesson from our God: look boldly at what is given you to see and learn. In certainty of truth, if we have honour and faith and purity and love, though the vision tarry yet in the end it will surely come.

> "So, as we enter here from day to day,
> And leave our burden at this minster gate,
> Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
> The tumult of the time disconsolate
> To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
> While the eternal ages watch and wait."

Trust and be faithful: then verily, "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off."

IX

SIR THOMAS MORE

"Keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right: for that shall bring a man peace at the last."—Ps. xxxvii. 38.

WE are assembled to do honour to the memory of a noble man.[1] Four hundred years ago in this church Thomas More lectured on Augustine's *City of God*.

It is easy to imagine the scene. The church crowded with eager young men, with here and there an older scholar, priest, or monk; the young barrister, a keen student and a ripe Latinist, with a great zeal for knowledge, and much more, with a deep love of God: a picture it is of the heart of England as it welcomed the treasures of the new learning and brought them all to the feet of Christ. Not one word of those lectures is preserved; but we know that More as he went through the books of that famous treatise was "not so much discussing the points of Divinity as the precepts of moral philosophy and history wherewith these books

[1] Preached at S. Lawrence Jewry, on June 22, 1900, on the unveiling by the Right Honourable the Speaker of the House of Commons of a window to the memory of Sir Thomas More, given by Mr. H. C. Richards, Q.C., M.P.

are stored. And he did this"—so his great-grandson adds—"with such an excellent grace that whereas, before, all the flower of English youths went to hear the famous Grocyn, who was lately come out of Italy to teach Greek in the public University, under whom, as also that famous Grammarian Linacre, Sir Thomas himself had profited greatly, of whom he had Aristotle's works interpreted in Greek, now all England almost left his lecture and flocked to hear Sir Thomas More."[1]

But the lectures were far more than the comments of a cultivated man on a great book. They were—their subject compelled them to be—an appeal to the great principle of the moral government of the world, the eternal justice of God. Augustine had spoken at a great crisis in the world's history—when Rome had fallen before the arms of Alaric. He had pointed to the rising Church, the home of purity and peace, as designed by God to fill the place of that splendid world empire which was broken down and ready to vanish away. Christ's Kingdom, the City of God, was to be eternal, because in it men should learn to rule by a law even grander than that which had made Rome's greatness, the law of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.

As More looked back on that picture he could not but have spoken, in these lectures, as he did later in his *Utopia*, something of the bitter disappointment which falls upon all zealous and sensitive souls when

[1] Cresacre More's *Life of Sir Thomas More*, ed. 1727, pp. 44–45.

they contemplate the failure of man to rise to the calls of God. And surely that failure means that age by age the Christian claim needs to be restated as Augustine at the beginning of the fifth century and More at the end of the fifteenth restated it, as a perpetual appeal of the all-holy God to guide and rule the whole life of man.

More lectured, I do not doubt, to show how the Christian Commonwealth differed from the pagan, and the bases upon which it rests. And above all it rests, as S. Augustine said,[1] not so much on knowledge as on love. "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth." The Christian State seeks its foundation in the life of Christ: it stands, in Augustine's magnificent words, on "the mighty influence of the humility of God."

We find to-day the same Divine source of the true safety of Church and realm. The Christian Kingdom depends upon the Christian character. Far off and faltering is man's imitation of Christ, yet still where the inspiration is sought and followed it is love that edifies. Love, that great word which S. Paul knew to include charity, and self-sacrifice, and humility, and faith, and endurance, is still the builder of States.

It is the Christian vital principle which produces such a character as More's, "who reverenced his conscience as his king," and who brought into every action of his life the spirit of love which he had learnt at the feet of Christ. So long as the principles

[1] *De Civitate Dei*, bk. ix. ch. 20.

of Christianity give us great statesmen, lawyers, merchants, men of letters, such as he, the State based on those principles will endure. There is no promise that such men should be saved from error: there have been many since More whom we have loved though we could not follow them: but we know that in their sincerity of heart we have the most real security, under God, for the safety of Church and State.

That is the true philosophy of history which Augustine preached to his age, and More expounded to the men of the Renaissance.

It conquered the pagan theory that had belonged to the majesty of old Rome. It conquered the subtle revival of paganism in politics that was spreading to England in the days of More. Indeed, it may be hard, as the Italian statesman said, "to govern the world by paternosters"; but no one has ever discovered a safer rule for the State, or for the individual, than that which founds the duty of rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's on the obligation of giving to God the things that are God's.

And that golden rule was written on the heart of the man we remember to-day. "Keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right: for that shall bring a man peace at the last." How often must More have read in the Vulgate those words, so familiar to us in our Prayer Book version of the Psalms! They do not, it seems, represent the true reading of the Hebrew; but the sense is repeated again and again in the Psalter, and not least often in that great psalm,

which we know that he said daily,[1] which reiterates in endless variety of harmony: "Blessed are those that are undefiled in the way: and walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep His testimonies: and seek Him with their whole heart."

That thought must be uppermost in our minds when we commemorate the lawyer and statesman whose murder sent a thrill of horror through Christendom. We have a very special sympathy for him at this time. He looked over seas as we look, and saw how kindred should join hands and stand together for the right. He looked into social problems as we try to look, not as a Socialist, but as a Christian. He saw with Cassiodorus the true foundation of toleration, and with Augustine the true foundation of government. He was persuaded that "it is not in any man's power to believe what he list,"[2] and he knew that in the City of God "even those who rule serve those whom they seem to command."[3]

So we remember him to-day. There are prominent opinions of his which we do not share. England has rejected for ever the figment of an inalienable papal authority, founded on documents which the lawyers of More's day did not know to be forgeries. But we cannot part with our reverence for the saintliness and sincerity of the life of that hero of conscience who would not buy his freedom by a betrayal of his belief.

[1] Cres. More, p. 18.
[2] *Utopia*, bk. ii. ch. 9.
[3] *De Civitate Dei*, bk. xix. ch. 14.

The memory of it is the possession of all Englishmen; and to-day those who fitly represent great issues of the life of our country join, in this sanctuary of our ancient Church, in thanking God for one who knew how to live, in high place, and in disordered days, the simple life of a citizen of the Kingdom of God.

CHRIST'S CALL IN THE CHURCH

X

CREATION AND HOPE

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end."—Rev. xxi. 6.

"And there was evening and there was morning, one day."—Gen. i. 5.

THE note that is struck at the end of the Christian Bible is the same which sounded at the beginning. It is Hope.

The work of God is unending: it is summed up in God Himself, Who knows no time. That thought meets us as we turn to-day, at Septuagesima, in the lessons of our Church, towards Creation, the Creation that was, the Creation that is, the new Creation that shall be. From the beginning of time we look onward, past its ending, into the eternity in which God lives, and in which, through Him, we may live also.

In the first lesson for this morning we had the priestly record of the first Creation, in its poetic beauty, striving by simple words to express the solemn sweep of immeasurable thought. If it be of late composition it is still in all probability the work of a literary artist who had not only an inspired vision of God, a complete and invigorating faith, but was the keeper of ancient

traditions, the learned scribe who brought from the treasures of primitive record things, Jewish, Babylonian, Assyrian, that were very old. "The Hebrew version of a great Semitic epic" that magnificent chapter has been called: a great epic it was, which had for its subject the beginning of all things, which took the subject as it was presented to the minds of other nations and poured upon it the enlightening, vivid appreciation of the spiritual genius of the Jewish people. There passed, it seems, over the old legends a transforming, vivifying power which came from the intense reality of Israel's faith in God, the intimacy of Israel's knowledge of God as One Who was not far away but very nigh, and Who, as He worked now, every day, in the history of nations and in the soul of man, must have worked in that dim past which men called the beginning of time. God's work—how truly those Jews understood it!—must be, must always have been, of a piece. There is a consequence of intense importance in the doctrine of the Unity of God.

We need not stay to inquire how far, if in any way, that first chapter of Genesis was intended by its author to convey an exact record of what only by the direct inspiration of Almighty God could be recorded at all. There are statements in it which have existence apart from all religion, statements about "the world as a whole, [about] its parts and their structure":[1] there are other statements which belong to the fundamental thoughts about God, and man, and the world, upon

[1] Dillmann, *Genesis*, i. 48 (Eng. trans.).

which every religion rests. Call the presentation legendary, allegorical, mythical if you will, it is still clearly a vision of the past, revealed to God's chosen people, even while their view of the universe remained limited, like that of a child,—not at all related to scientific knowledge, to facts of geology or astronomy, but related above all to the religious idea, to the conception of God. It is thus that the writer sees so clearly into essential truth—into the necessity that what God creates must be, at its creation, "very good." It is true of all His works: it is repeated with emphasis: it has a deep and permanent meaning which is near to the secret of all life.

Look back at the whole picture: you cannot but be struck by its splendid confidence. However you take it, it is an inspired vision of the Mind of God in the creation of the world.

Now, over against this vision of the beginnings, the Church in her ordered services has set to-day the inspired picture of the new heaven and the new earth, that shall be when "the former things are done away." That picture, as it is drawn (so I, for one, believe) by the hand of the beloved disciple, may perhaps combine much that was in earlier Jewish apocalyptic writings, or that was to be found in Babylonian mythology and in the legends of other nations. I am not now concerned to discuss that. Nor do we stop to question how this vision, as S. John saw it, may be realised—how much is prediction, how much figure, how much historical record in half-veiled language, of the days then present,

of persecution, idolatry, horrors of sin, through which the Church of God had to pick her way. Certainly we see how it is all transfigured by the intense reality of the writer's faith. Take it as you will, it is real and true: it is a vision of the Mind of God.

So we set beside each other the vision of Genesis and the vision of the Apocalypse; and we ask what is the connection between those two creations which they picture, the old creation and the new, between that beginning of the worlds on which the Almighty looked and saw that it was good, and the beginning of the perfect world, lying, it may be, in the far future, when He that sitteth on the Throne shall say, "Behold, I make all things new."

The links between the two, I think, are clear to us. Between the two visions stands the Reality of which they, fact or figure, historic truth or poetic imagining, are but the symbols, and which is in the Mind of God. ἐγὼ τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος. The Mind of God: and beside that, reaching up to it, yet never attaining, stretching up hands which perpetually plead and seek, is the Hope of Man.

Creation, through its countless stages of development, through inanimate and animate matter, through lower to higher forms of life, through changing surroundings and continuous adaptation, is all advancing towards the ideal which is in the Mind of God. From Him it has its beginning: apart from Him no stage of its growth is possible: in Him alone it reaches the end towards which the whole creation groaneth and

travaileth in pain. He is ἀρχή and τέλος: its beginning and end. For the world is, in a very true sense, the manifestation of God. There are some thrilling words of Principal Caird's that come to me with this thought:[1]—

"In the nature of God or self-revealing Spirit there is contained, so to speak, the necessity of His self-manifestation in and to a world of finite beings, and especially in and to a world of finite intelligences made in His own image. If it be true, on the one hand, that, without the idea of God, nature and man would be unintelligible, there is a sense in which it is also true, on the other hand, that without nature and man God would be unintelligible. When, in the language of Christian thought, we say that all things exist 'for the glory of God,' that 'of Him and through Him and to Him are all things,' that 'the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal Power and Godhead,' that finite spirits in their ideal perfection 'are chosen in Him'—that is, in Christ—'before the foundation of the world,'—what such expressions imply is not merely that all things owe their existence to God's creative will and power, or even that the Divine thought is the constitutive principle of all finite things and beings; but further, that God fulfils Himself, realises His own nature, in the existence of the world, and above all in the spiritual nature and life and destiny of man; that, with reverence be it said, the very being and blessed-

[1] *Gifford Lectures*, vol. i. pp. 154–155.

ness of God are implicated in the existence, the perfection, the salvation, of finite souls. Beyond the relation of the creature to the Creator is the relation of the spirit of man to Him in Whose infinite life we participate, and Whose infinite love finds in us its fulfilment and satisfaction."

Creation is indeed a revelation of the Mind of God. The existence of the world is indeed, in some sense, involved in the very nature of the Creator.

There is the meaning of the immeasurable sweep of it, of the "universal continuity of events" which geology has made clear and certain to us; of "the universal inter-relations of objects through infinite space" which astronomy has revealed.[1] All this is the objective expression, and that certainly in no pantheistic sense, of the Mind of God.[2]

It is that surely which is forgotten by those, well-meaning but hasty, who are busy to defend this or that theory of God's work in the making of the universe. We are not concerned to claim for Him this or that "special creation," an interference with what we loosely call the "Laws of Nature," an intervention of a "higher intelligence," the turning, for instance, as has been suggested, of the law of natural selection to produce man.[3] It is ours, rather, simply to assert the Unity of Creation and the Unity of the Creator. God "Who used these laws for the creation of man" is "the

[1] See Le Conte's *Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought*, p. 55.

[2] Cf. *ibid.* p. 302.

[3] Wallace: see Aubrey Moore, *Science and the Faith*, p. 202.

same God Who worked in and by these laws in creating the lower forms of life."[1] All, by slow stages, or by what seems to us a sudden step, all life and growth, is the visible actual presentment of the thought in the Mind of God, the ever Blessed Trinity, Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier. The Unity of God forbids us to separate His physical from His moral action. Again and again do the books of the Bible claim the regularity of physical nature as in itself part of a moral purpose. The physical and the moral world are alike, but in different degrees and in different aspects, revelations of the moral nature of God. One revelation leads to, and prepares for, another—a higher. In the moral world as in the physical, because in reality, in the Mind of God, the truth, the revelation, is *one*: He is ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος—the beginning and the end.

How does that thought bear on the life which lies before us? As the past came from the Mind of God so does the picture of the future lie there. As the book of Creation is, so is the Revelation of S. John, a vision of the ideal of the Divine thought.

And we do not speak merely of Heaven, but we speak of earth, of the immediate future which may be within our knowledge, and the effects of which on our own characters certainly will be the result of our own doings and our own lives. Take the history of our own time, take the life of a great nation, of a great city, of a great University, there is, we recognise, for all these an ideal in the Mind of Almighty God.

[1] Wallace: see Aubrey Moore, *op. cit.* p. 203.

A nation just and honourable in all its dealings, bold, fearless in championing the right, religious, led by men of stainless lives and purest aims, working, though it be through terrible sacrifices, towards a great brotherhood of peoples, and a great unity and extension of the Church of Christ—where to statesman as to minister of God there shall be neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free—but all shall be one in the embracing love of God for man. Do we not dimly see this? Is it not before our eyes when we pray and when we picture our ideal of the future of our own dear land? Yes: and it is there in our minds flashed from the perfect picture in the Mind of God.

A nation which has gone through years of struggle and sacrifice must have set in its heart, we trust, a perpetual supplication to the Father that He will protect and chasten in us the idea of Empire, that blessing will come from Him in the release of native races from cruel oppression, that He will stamp on our national statesmanship the expression of His mercy and love as He has revealed them to us, that He will stir within us all a life according to the ideal of sacrifice and purity and honour which comes from Him. And then in no narrow sense—can there be a narrow sense for such words?—we shall be the missionaries of God's salvation to the world. And if (it is very true of many of us) we can reach to the highest only by way of the things that we know and see and handle each day of our humdrum lives, what shall we

say of the society in which we are knit and bound? So complicated it is: God forbid that we should ever think of its complexity as if it were that of a machine which we could not modify, an engine which, like ignorant bystanders, we could only stupidly watch as it worked: God's thought gives us the clue to the complexities: we see a society imaged in the great city which His prophet knows.

A city in which trade is honourable and honest to the core, in which there is no strife of classes but a real feeling of union in Christ, where there is not a niggard almsgiving but an enthusiastic, universal spirit of charity, of love,—where the glory of the Lord lightens and where the Lamb is the light thereof:[1] that is a glimpse of the ideal in the Mind of God.

What shall we say of an ideal University? Surely it is often in the minds of those who love this place now and in her past, and pray God to give a still brighter future. Do we not want, you will say, more reality, more unselfishness, more love of knowledge for its own sake, more eagerness to apprehend everything which the Eternal Wisdom of the Father lays before us day by day? And all this God sees for us, if we will take it to ourselves.

And so the knowledge of God as our Creator presses straight home. There is in the Mind of Him in Whom we live and move and have our being, a perfect picture of what we each of us may become—God's knowledge of our peculiar faculties, powers, individual nature.

[1] Rev. xxi. 23.

The work to which we are called here or elsewhere springs from Him, and for it there is His ideal of the performance. So it is with friendship: so it is with love. There is God's picture of what it may be to us. It is not a destiny, from which we cannot escape: it is a boon given freely for our acceptance: we cling to the knowledge of the essential freedom of our immortal natures—yet God holds within Himself all their almost infinite possibilities.

And the ideal is, now as it was nineteen hundred years ago, visible in Jesus, the Incarnate Son. He is the ideal Man: He is therefore Divine: "He is the goal and completion of humanity."[1] Conscious union with God, Who is our Beginning and End, is possible in and through His Divine Life. He alone has perfectly lived on earth the Life which was imaged of God in Heaven. And thus it is that His Divine Life in its perfection is full of guidance for every diversity of human life, which in every variety of form and circumstance is striving towards the ideal which He alone has attained. His pattern Life in our minds, prayer in our souls, so shall we see the picture of our own characters which lies in God the Creator of our life.

And so we turn back to Creation as the writer of Genesis pictured it; and we see that it is transfigured by the thought that God Who designed it saw that it was good. We brush aside for this one day the haunting memories of failure and of sin; for Creation means Hope. We seize upon this great fact about the

[1] Le Conte, p. 361.

Bible's account of the beginning, that it always looks forward. All through the lessons we read to-day, the accounts of the beginning of the worlds, and the accounts of the New City of God's creation—we hear always an insistent voice telling us to look forward. It is not of the past that the writer seems to speak. There is an evening, but it only looks on to a morning. First after the creation of the light comes the evening, and then the morning again. "There was evening and there was morning—one day." So it is all through the record of God's people: our second lesson this evening ends with the words, "There shall be no night there . . . for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever."

That is the lesson of the Bible, as I understand it. God has created, is creating still, will create—for a purpose: there is always a future in the Divine counsels for which we are created and made. That is quite clearly true of the world. One who had right to speak of many branches of Natural Science[1] said not so many years ago: "Every birth is in reality a creation. . . . Don't let us let go our hold on the one only fact which is in the nature of an explanation,—namely, the definite guidance and direction of every living germ, in the processes of its growth, for the discharge of functions which always for a time lie wholly in the future. Of this indisputable and universal fact there is only one explanation—that, namely, contained in the magnificent words of the

[1] The late Duke of Argyll, *What is Science?*

Psalmist: 'Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in Thy Book all my members were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.'" "This truth applies," he said, "literally to every individual creature that now exists: and Science teaches us that it applied to the whole series since life began upon our planet."

That, we may say in our own words, is the wonderful fact about God's creation—that it is always looking forward; and it is that which enables us to take those words of a trained investigator and say for ourselves, as he said to Darwin, "I cannot see any explanation of such facts except the working of Mind."

There comes, then, to us with confidence at Septuagesima a feeling of trust in the revelation of God, and of trust in Him for the future which He has designed.

But our Church did not give us these lessons to-day merely to teach us that she stands with God's revelation in her hand, and fearlessly—I should rather say delightedly—welcomes every discovery of Science, because every new discovery tends only to make clearer God's working in the world, in the heart of man, His paths in the seas, His way in the mighty waters. We are to be reminded of still more than that—of this, that every creation, every work, of God is moral, that what stands behind life, what has the strength and the hope, for the present and for the world to come, is the soul. It is for the soul that God speaks, and He gives for it words of inextinguishable hope.

That is the lesson which we are to take to our

hearts every year with the birth of spring. What God gives us, if we are trying to follow Him, is not merely progress, it is creation.

I can use no other language than that of the faith of the Christian Church. We believe that God gave us, at our baptism, the spark of a life that is truly Divine —that we were new created, made members of Christ, children of God, inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. The Church welcomed us, God blessed us, with the gift of a new birth: and *that* gift, that birth, looks always forward to the life beyond. God has given to us all the power to create, through the life of His initial creation, to create good, the pure lives, noble thoughts that are always bringing forth new fruit in other lives, enriched and ennobled to the service of God and man. We talk of great poets, or great philosophers, as creative: we far too readily forget that we are all creative. To-day let us remember it, remember it to the glory of God. Let every new aspiration mean truly for us a new creation of good. When we say with the poet—

> "I love all beauteous things,
> I seek and adore them;
> God hath no better praise,
> And man in his hasty days
> Is honoured for them,"

let us pass on, as he passes, from that thought of God's creation, when He saw that it was good, to the echoed thought—

> "I too will something make
> And joy in the making."

We will *joy* in the making—

> "Altho' to-morrow it seem
> Like the empty words of a dream
> Remembered on waking;"

for, if God wills, our work, however humble, will not thus pass away.

"We are saved by Hope": those words are indeed a true epigram of experience—and they are words you may take and write under every record of God. Eternal work, changing, renewing, subordinating the old life to the new, the lower to the higher, coming from God, with an immeasurable future before it; the world, with its myriad forms of life, is a very picture of perpetual Hope.

Too true, it is possible to defeat the purpose, to choose the lower, and to sink from it lower still, farther than it is given us to see: the very nature of God's creation shows surely that there is such a thing as to lose God's blessing, miss His purpose, waste the creative life. But the real inspiration that He has given us has been given from the day when He created the heavens and the earth, and it is the inspiration to look forward. How wretched would be the days of an old man if they had only memory and not hope; but it is now as when it was first said, "The evening and the morning were the first day." God has His morning alike for old and young. You close your eyes in peace, in the hopefulness of God, and as you think of the pilgrimage that may still be before you, you can make that beautiful prayer your own as did our great writer who prayed it the evening before his death:—

"Go with each of us to rest; if any awake, temper to them the dark hours of watching; and when the day returns to us, our sun and comforter, call us up with morning faces and with morning hearts—eager to labour—eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion—and if the day be marked for sorrow, strong to endure it."

Yes! Eager to labour, eager to be happy, strong to endure!

Before you there stretch prospects which you cannot see, but which it will be yours, in God's providence, to reach. We begin the world. There is hope before us. You have training which is to carry you through life. You have work that calls you to do it. Much more, you have a Divine character that calls you to imitate it. Day by day a little nearer—or if there has been failure and you start again a little farther back, still there is the Hope before you.

To make the world a little better, to use those talents God has given you as He means them to be used, nobly, strenuously, unselfishly, to hold out a hand to keep others up, to employ to the full all that creative energy with which your soul is stored by the gift of God: it is a glorious prospect. God forbid that we should ever be downhearted, whatever our difficulties or our sorrows. For it is a real lesson of life, as S. Paul well knew, through all his watchings and fastings and weariness and pain, that "*Experience* worketh Hope."

Knowledge gives Hope. Experience of life gives

Hope. God is not going to desert you. You will have many things to repent of, very bitterly it may be and for very long, but repentance itself means Hope. The evening passes and there is the morning to come, and each new morning's gift will come from the providence of God. Many of us to-day are thinking of the great work of Missions: as one who has seen it, as a humble and a thankful student, in many parts of India, I dare to say, a *great* work it is.

A Christian preacher, who knows the love and speaks the message of his Master, can scarce find words in which to proclaim the lesson of Hope strongly enough, on the day when we should all be inspired to hear a new call to us to advance. Hope for the world's future: Hope most truly in God's providence for ourselves. It is hard to find words to say strongly enough that the real delight of life which God gives us is in this lesson of Creation, its hopefulness. Strive, it says, strive to win, with all your heart and soul, what God has set before you to-day, in the inspiration of prayer, the life of union in sacrament, and believe that you do not lose it when the day closes, when you are called to another place, another life. You take it with you from the evening to the morning of another day, which, please God, may have greater gifts in store. Cherish—it is the lesson of creation—cherish every spark of life that has been lighted in your soul. Live in continued and inexhaustible thankfulness. The very fact that you can remember God's leading in the past is a reminder that He is before you still.

Often we hear it said in a great University, in the seedplot of vigorous national life, concerning one person or other—"There is a great future before him." There is a great future before us all, in the will of God, if only we will be loyal.

When our Lord Jesus left His disciples He said, "I am with you always." The evening was at hand, but there was to be the dawn of a new morning in which He would never forsake them. Ah! we feel, it is all so puzzling, a world of broken lights, dimness that we cannot pierce, a way that is overhung with clouds. Yes, that is the evening. But the morning is before us. In the beginning God created: and though, when the day has come, we are surrounded by temptations, and the bitter consequences of sin, there is given to strengthen and to arouse us, the vision of the New Heaven and the New Earth that He is still creating, where He will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely, where the evening will have passed into that glorious morning when there shall be no more sin, and when he that overcometh shall inherit all things.

XI

LOVE AND LAW

"Love is the fulfilling of the law."—Rom. xiii. 10.

IS not the first fact that strikes us when we begin to think seriously about life the fact of law? So long as we are children in body, or children in mind, the deep things seems to pass by us; perhaps it is well for us sometimes that it should be so; but certainly there comes a time when this can be so no longer, when suddenly a strong note breaks in upon our life, like the sound of a great bell, which first startles, then solemnises, then commands. The voice of God I should call it, summoning us: "Come up hither, and I will show thee what things shall be hereafter"—what things are now, though you see them not, what things are eternal and insistent, behind all life.

And the first thought that is impressed upon you is the thought of law. That means, the moment you look into it, the thought of consequence. There is where you have been astray when you have not thought deeply of life. You have forgotten the certainty, the inevitableness, of it all; you have

forgotten how the world passes on in an ordered procession, in which every one has his place, and no man can turn the march aside as it tramps slowly forward. It is as a great thinker once said, in simple words such as great thinkers so often use because they see—what idle people forget—how much they mean: "Things are what they are, and their consequences will be what they will be." You cannot stop them. There is law behind all, over all, law certain and calculable in its effects to those who know it, and inevitable in its effects to all whether they know it or not. Such is the law of growth, the law of decay, the law of consequence: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Those are the certainties which we observe when we think and to which we give the name of law, because we feel, sometimes with confidence and sometimes trembling, that there is behind them something real and tremendous, that we can only very dimly see, that is almighty and powerful, that we cannot escape.

And how grim it all looks! The law that makes all creatures live through others' death, the law that makes disease triumphant, the law that seems to crush the poor and the suffering and the weak, the law that has stamped on some people's faces—so that you see as you pass them hurriedly in the street—the mark of some awful experience, of the realisation of how terrible the issues are with which we are every one of us sooner or later set face to face.

And now see what this man, whose words I quoted

when I began, thinks of it. These are typical words. What does he mean? S. Paul has two conceptions of law. First he thinks of the Old Testament law, a splendid code of precepts and statutes and ordinances given by God for the direction of man's life, something which is holy and just and good, and yet has great terrors behind it, terrors for those who offend in the least and become guilty of the whole, terrors of hypocrisy for those who outwardly conform but inwardly break it, terrors for those who feel perpetually a conflict between their own inclinations, and their own power of performance, and the precepts which press so closely on every side of their life. And then he has another thought. Behind this law, given of God to the men of old, stands something greater. It is not a code but a principle. Behind all law, grand though the law is and necessary, lies a much grander and more certain thing, an eternal and spiritual fact—the fact of righteousness, the fact of God Himself. Law in its highest sense, above any temporary expression of it which God may have given for man or man made wisely for himself, law in its highest sense is the expression of God's eternal will of righteousness.

That is a step which the man can take who believes in God, and a great step it is; it plants a man on the rock of fundamental religion, which he is indeed foolish who derides or disparages. It gives an explanation. It says that these grim certainties of law we see have a mind behind them, a will: their certainty is

part of this eternity, and they have a purpose of righteousness because He is all holy and all wise and all good. That is indeed a great step; but the Christian can go farther, because Jesus Christ has gone farther, and has shown the way. Law is certain; law has an explanation; law has a meaning of righteousness which reassures us that all will be well in the main. But much more. It has a purpose of love. S. John puts the thought in simplest words—God is Love. So there is behind all this splendour of righteousness and justice—behind the stern punishment of sin which that involves—the eternity of God's love. Law and love are in God really inseparable. Eternal love is the fulfilling, the completion, of eternal law. So with God our Creator: so —S. Paul is saying in the passage from which I have chosen my text—with us. Direct, straight to ourselves he applies the thought; and so the preacher of Christ must ever apply it.

I speak to you at a time very definitely marked in the Christian year.[1] It is a point which people do not notice, I think, as much as they might well do to their profit, that the Church introduces a season of penitence by the thought not of God's sternness against sin, but of God's love. I am not to-night going to talk of the benefit there is in weeks of very clear and definite self-restraint, when the words of God and the thought of God's eternal law against sin, speaking to us so plainly in conscience, are given freedom of access, in quietness,

[1] Preached at Quinquagesima.

to our inmost souls. I will only just say that every one who has tried to use Lent worthily, to make a real difference for these weeks in the way, for example, in which he spends his time, and the pleasure which he allows himself, finds, and knows for certain, that he is at the end a simpler, and truer, and stronger man, and that as he has drawn nigh to God so God very really has drawn nigh to him. But what I wish to say to-night, before Lent begins, and when, if we are wise, we are thinking by what definite rules we shall make it useful to us, is that the object of it all is, quite plainly, for us to be made more and more convinced of the supremacy of the love of God.

That is how it is introduced to-day. Look at the Epistle (1 Cor. xiii. 1), that splendid description of the power which endures where all else perishes, the power that is greater than faith, greater than hope, that belongs to the time when knowledge and tongues shall have vanished, and we shall know even as we are known. There S. Paul, with glowing inspiration, draws out the spiritual exposition of the principle of Divine love. Look how certain he is that love is quite impossible except in action. How we have taken up into our own language those splendid words—and there are none finer, in all there has been written in English, than that chapter in the Bibles our forefathers gave us—taken them up, we have, and shown that we have understood them, by giving to that beautiful word "charity" a noble sense as the visible expression of the thought of love, a love that goes out to others with

goodness in its hands. Not the giving of alms only. How ready we are to talk of "the mere giving of alms," as if we could ever, if we gave wisely, with thought, with prayer, with sacrifice, give half enough! Not the giving of alms only, but the giving of the heart's best gifts in comfort and succour and restraint and guidance, in the ways that pass knowledge but are plain to love.

That is the Epistle for to-day. And the Gospel (S. Luke xviii. 31) makes it quite plain by one great example. S. Luke shows how Christ's sufferings were an essential part of His work, and how when sufferers came to Him He welcomed their faith and gave it its one issue: "Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee:" how, in one word, the Divine Messiah "went about doing good," and so for ever goes, because love is eternal and Divine.

Now, these two thoughts, the spiritual exposition of charity and its outward expression in the acts of God and man, are united in that saying of S. Paul—"Love is the fulfilment of the law."

There is set before you an ideal of goodness. Honour, purity, truth, unselfishness, temperance, faith belong to it. There are rules laid down which show you how you may reach these virtues, God's grace leading you on. But then the difficulties are great and pressing; before you are the rough road, or the flowery path, the slough of despond, or the deep waters that come in even unto your soul. Law is the fact which presses upon you. You see how minute it is.

You see how God not only forbids you murder and adultery and theft, forbids you to lie and drink and swear and be idle yourself or slanderous of others, but also goes deep down into your soul, follows your sin right home, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of your heart. Then, when you feel all this —and indeed you do feel it when you begin to examine your conscience in the sight of God—when you hear the voice reasoning of righteousness and temperance and the judgment to come, there is the inevitable consequence; indeed, like Felix, when S. Paul was the preacher, you tremble and are terrified. But then comes Jesus Christ, He Who opened the eyes of the blind, Who dealt with men on earth according to their faith, and so deals now; and He shows you that as God's child you belong to His purpose of love. So long as you fix your eyes on what you have to do you must be full of terrors—if you see the truth and reality of Divine law at all. But all is changed when you fix your eyes on Him, the eternal example of perfect obedience.

It is not what you do for God, but what God does for you, that is really at the root of the whole matter. Faith, your faith, is ready, but it is He Who opens the eyes of the blind. Hope encourages. How would you go on each day without it? But the greatest of all is charity, not because it is your love, but because it is God's. Now there is the force of the new start in life which each Lent is intended to give us. When you find goodness difficult, when you set to work in earnest

to make yourself obey God's law, remember most of all that not only does it lead to love of God, but it comes from the love of God. That is a further extension of the thought which S. Paul is so full of in the Epistle to the Romans, the thought that we are the creatures of God's hands, the old thought of the old world, full of comfort to the penitent. "It is He that hath made us." "God has made us, and therefore He is responsible for us. He has made me because He loves me."[1] His law is the law of His love; the Son of His love has given Himself for me; the Spirit of His love is daily and hourly helping me to rise to the fulness of His lovingkindness and grace. If only I will trust God, if only I will look not to myself but to God, most certainly He will fulfil the purpose of my life. The law of righteousness shall be fulfilled in His love.

But perhaps, perhaps you will say, what an immoral doctrine! Does not that come to mean that I am to do nothing, for God will do all, so it matters not how I live? No. That is just what S. Paul forbids you to say. Christ's revelation to the world was a revelation of a new and universal duty. It is by that you can test yourself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour. You have before you the life of Christ which is the perfect embodiment of the law, and you find on every line of it written the great word, Love.

A famous writer of ours—to whom a few years ago we gave that affection which comes naturally from a whole people when books show them a real man, the

[1] Gore, *Romans*, i. 281.

creation of God, and they see that it is good—said once some strong words which it is a strength to remember. He was a man who suffered much during his life and who suffered with a bold front and a happy heart, and on whose lips the night before his sudden death were prayers for pardon of "our broken purposes of good and our idle endeavours against evil." He said, with a conviction which if we had it would sweep away the shame and sin and cruelty which drag men down and would change the face of England: "We are not damned for doing wrong, but for not doing right. Christ would never hear of negative morality. 'Thou shalt' was ever His word, with which He superseded 'Thou shalt not.'" And truly S. Paul says that is the meaning of all the commandments. They seem to forbid, but they all are summed up in this word: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Now, your business and mine this Lent is to see how we are doing the duties to others that God has laid upon us, to father and mother, and family, to friends, to those who employ us, or those whom we employ, to all among whom we are set. That is what we have to find out. How are we doing it? Search into your heart and see. And then, even if the duty be a burden, persevere, begin it again, "force yourself up to it," and then some day—surely it will not be long—you will know its delight, you will know that it all means Love.

There before you is the world of duty. Go out into

it each day to show the love that God has put into your heart. So carry out the duty that lies before you towards all, and the rest is God's matter. In every act for others, and every thought to please and to help, even when bitter loneliness, it may be, seems fixed upon your soul, He will come truly and really into your heart. And in that great gift of Himself He shows you that love is now, and every day more and more will be, till there comes the perfection you see now so dimly in a glass, the fulfilment of the law you have known. For that the whole world is hungering. There is a tonic—that knowledge—against weariness or despair. There is the one true inspiration for the life the Church's Lent should help you to live. Law, you think, has been your schoolmaster, your pedagogue —like the slave in the old heathen times who brought the children to their teachers—the slave that leads you to Christ; but all the time it has been love that has drawn you, and it is love that will be—if only you will suffer it—the conqueror and master of your life: love in the great brotherhood, the Church; love in the heaven of God.

XII

THE POWERS OF EVIL

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the spiritual [hosts] of wickedness in the heavenly [places]."—EPH. vi. 12.

IT is a difficult passage to translate, and our latest and best commentator says that the Revised Version, in part, is "hardly intelligible."[1] I have ventured to alter the Authorised Version a little as I read my text. But what S. Paul means is quite clear. It is the first lesson the Church would have us learn in Lent, as to-day's Gospel shows. He means that the life of struggle, which every man who is worthy to be called a man must live, is not only with material things, not only to make a living, to push his way among men, or even to study and learn and know, but with spiritual powers behind all this that seems so palpable and real.

S. Paul has come to the conclusion of that splendid Epistle in which he has been telling what life in God's Church really is to those who use the opportunities and the grace that are given. He has been speaking

[1] Dr. Armitage Robinson, *Ephesians*, p. 214.

all along of life, the fullest life. There are people, poor as well as rich, old as well as young, who care only to amuse themselves, to have pleasure, to be happy (as they would say). He passes those by now; they do not belong to life at all; those who live in pleasure are *dead*. The world, too, passes them by, and hurries on; everything that is worth living for and doing, everything that makes man really man, they have no part in at all. It is a terrible, miserable fate, but he cannot pause now to think of it; he is speaking to those who, however falteringly, recognise that they belong to a world of effort, which means a world of power, because they belong to Christ who fought and God who rules.

And he tells them, Do not think that your fight, which you have to keep up for Christ's sake, is only against visible things, or even against the sin you can estimate and know the foulness of, as it were, by instinct. There really are powers of evil behind this, spiritual hosts of wickedness, and that is what makes the struggle so doubly perilous and intense.

We have ceased to think much about personality in evil. I need not discuss the reasons, or how far it is a passing, visibly passing, phase of thought, belonging to the shallow dogmatism about spiritual things which was current a generation ago, when people, some of them clever, thought that they understood everything in this world and the next, everything seen and unseen, everything spiritual as well as everything you can look at and touch. I need say nothing about that.

But I must, as I have this text before me, just say that it is quite certain that S. Paul and the Evangelists believed in "the existence and the formidable power of evil spirits, the enemies of God and of the human race. They believed that the crimes of wicked men were not to be attributed exclusively to themselves, but in part to the temptations of the devil, and that the best and noblest men were accessible to his malignity."[1]

And that, there can be no real doubt, was the teaching of our Lord Himself. If evil spirits had no real existence, He would never have spoken words of terrible solemnity which gave His authority to the belief in them. I had rather not use my own words; I can find none so good as those of a great teacher among the Congregationalists, who put the matter, as it seems to me, with a wise strength.

"It may be suggested," he said, "that as our Lord spoke the language, He thought the thoughts of His country and His time; that as His contemporaries believed in the existence of evil spirits, He also believed in their existence. But it was not for Him to mistake shadows for realities in that invisible and spiritual world, which was His true home and which He had come to reveal to man. It was not for Him to imagine that His Kingdom was menaced by enemies that had no existence except in the dreams of popular superstition. It was not for Him to suppose that by His death on the Cross and His ascension into heaven He

[1] Dale, *Ephesians*, p. 413.

would dislodge and dethrone a prince whose power and malignity were only the fantastic product of a gloomy imagination. It was not for Him—the Judge, whose lips are to pronounce the sentence which will secure eternal blessedness or doom to eternal death—it was not for Him to warn men that He will condemn them to eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, if there is no devil to destroy, and no evil angels to share his destruction."[1]

So wrote that wise and sincere teacher, Dr. Dale; and thus much, whatever else, our Lord must surely have meant when He spoke of that experience of temptation which stands embedded in our Gospels. And so S. Paul taught, because his Master taught so. "We wrestle against the principalities, the powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."

But you will not take S. Paul as wishing only to emphasise this fact, to declare this warning of the power of evil. What he is most eager to make Christians understand is *the reality of spiritual struggle.* What he says means this. If you have once really understood that you have an immortal soul, that you are the child of God, with an eternal future before you, there will be nothing, there can be nothing, in the whole world that you would give in exchange for your soul, nothing which you could set before the struggle to keep that soul pure, and responsive, and obedient to the call and the love of Almighty God.

[1] Dale, *Ephesians*, p. 421.

And that is the real struggle of life—not for wealth, or knowledge, or success, but for character. There it is that the spiritual foes beset you ; there it is, in what S. Paul calls the heavenly sphere, that the dangerous enemies are to be met, in "the invisible world in which the spiritual life is lived"[1]; there it is that you will feel not only that, as S. James says, you are drawn aside by your own evil desire and enticed, but that "in the dark background behind human nature," there are "unseen but personal spiritual adversaries" banded against your immortal soul.[2]

There are two stages in a man's life which we should do well always to bear in mind, because they are both needful to us if we are to become what God made us to be. The first comes when we awake to the fact that if we are to be good men or women at all, worthy to be called men and women, we shall have a hard struggle for it. When we are children—and how often childhood stretches down far into men's and women's lives! —we either take things easily, as they come, and think no more of the changes of life than that they will keep on coming, and they will all be very much alike, and all we have to do is to be happy in them, or make the best of them, or we are so much interested in everything which comes to us, all the new things we see and learn, all the things that happen every day, that our time passes away in a sort of perpetual curiosity, in which everything is worth doing because it is new, but

[1] J. Armitage Robinson, *Ephesians*, p. 133.
[2] Gore, *Ephesians*, pp. 239, 241.

there is no time to make sure of one impression before we pass on to another.

Then the first stage of a man's life comes when he awakes to the fact that if he is to live at all he must struggle for it; if he is to learn it means labour, serious, persistent labour; if he is to make the most of his strength he must train it, of his health he must preserve and not waste it; if he is to hold his own among men he must know what men think and have thought; he must be determined, and fearless, and truthful to the inmost convictions of his heart. The man awakes; he learns—what a shock it is to most of us!—that time does not stand still, that if he does not bestir himself, the tide will have swept by and left him, and he will be no use to his fellows or himself. He stands up, ready for the struggle, and in a moment he is in the thick of it. Its absorbing interest seizes him, and he could no more tear himself away than could an infant caught in the complications of some great machine. He has ceased to be a child; he has escaped the devil's snare of slackness and idleness. He has begun to live, and every day he lives the struggle is keen and continuous. But not for worlds would he go back. He knows the joy of combat against obstacles. He knows what true living is.

That is the first stage. But the second is far more important. It is that which makes all the difference between life which is earthly, which may become, in S. James's stern words, sensual, devilish—for if you awake and know you must do something, it by no

means follows that you will do right. To be awake to the need of action is in itself no protection against the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Sometimes it seems only to give them new strength—life that is earthly, the difference between that, I say, and life that is of the Spirit.

The second stage comes when man awakes to the fact that he does not live by bread alone, that it is not the circumstances of his life, not where he lives or what his work is, that matter a jot to his true self, to the spirit, to the soul. All life long his fight may be to learn; or it may be against poverty; or it may be against bad health which seems to cramp and limit every effort; or it may be with the conditions of his life, the peculiar troubles of a particular occupation, the peculiar distractions and interruptions and vexations of such or such a work. But it is not this which really matters; it is not the outer circumstances which matter; it is the *spiritual* conditions we have to deal with, and fight our way through, and conquer among. "Not the things the tempter uses for his tools, but the tempter; not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness."[1]

The first stage of man's awakening may have led to a successful struggle. You may have got on, secured a good position or a good business, or made yourself a happy home, and feel that you have started life well. Or even (not for me or for most of us here, but for some) it may be more still; you may become learned,

[1] Phillips Brooks, *The Law of Growth*, p. 76.

or rich, or popular, or influential, or famous. You may have gained the world—but there is still the struggle in your own soul, for the tempting voice says, "Fall down and worship me." Here is the fight to which S. Paul prays God his friends may awake: here is the battle for which they need indeed the whole armour of God. Truth and righteousness, and peace of mind and faith, the helmet of God's salvation and the sword of His eternal Word of promise and protection; those are what you need; for it is written, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." One who tries to answer to God's grace, who tries to become what Christ set before him to be, has reached —be it early or late—to this second stage of man's life.

A man or woman who has been converted, as some call it, a person who really wants to do the very best he knows, has come to this great standing-place. Surely when you put your heart open before God the message comes to you; surely it is in the heart of many of you now. Let there be no delusion about it—*there* is the real struggle before you. Are you to be honest and loyal and pure and self-restrained? You will have to fight for it. None of these things will come to you by getting on in the world any more than they will come to you by sitting still. They will come to you only by striving daily, in the humble faith and fear of God, in the world of spiritual things, by fighting manfully—as they promised for you who brought you to Jesus—against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Ah! some may say, all this is only fit for idle people who have time to think what they will do, and need not do it if they don't want to. We here, perhaps you will say, have never felt anything like this; some of us have a hard life, and some of us a very humdrum one —there is the home, and the work, and no very great temptation. But that is not true; Christ's example speaks to us; no temptations are small. Every temptation, as you yield to it and sink under it, is strong enough to kill a soul. Whoever you are, it is a real fight you have to make against real evil; and, in every sin, there is, behind it, far, far more evil than you see.

Yes, indeed, it is real. But let our last word be of strength, Christ's strength, as we stand at the beginning of a new Lent. If it is joy to awake to the need of energy to live truly at all, ten times greater happiness it is to awake to the reality of the spiritual fight. There is no one whose happiness can for a moment compare with his who throws himself into the fight on God's side, who knows that God is with him and God will carry him through. May God give to us that happiness and that strength!

XIII

THE POWER OF AN UNKNOWN FUTURE

"And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto (thy) peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes."—S. LUKE xix. 41.

PALM SUNDAY is for us a day full of the thought of something impending. It is not what has happened so much as what will happen that stirs and thrills us as we listen and read. There comes upon us the sense of something behind the great show and excitement of that day, of things that men did not then see; of something behind our own life each day, which *we* do not see—something that has its outward signs for those who are attentive, and yet that is so easily unheeded. There are times in the lives of all of us when we feel much farther than we see: when we know that there is something real that we have not grasped, and something coming that we do not know, when there is forced upon us, as by some unseen power, a sense of anticipation which is mingled with dread. A great foreign writer of drama and of philosophy, the most original artist of our time, delights

to dwell on the subtly powerful sense of mystery stirred by the breath of an unperceived approach. For a moment you think that what Maeterlinck describes is not at all like human life as you know it. But after a while you begin to feel the strange, weird fascination of it, of the iterations, of the interjections, of the convulsive brevity of speech. It is a mystic land you are moving in, and it seems to belong to the dim and legendary past, and yet, in some strange way, to the future of your own life; and as it exerts its power over you you see that it belongs also to the simplest ideas which are as real to-day as ever they were—Retribution, Sacrifice, Love, Death. The blind folk sitting deserted in the primeval forest, with the sound of the unknown ocean in their ears; the three generations watching in the darkened room and feeling the mysterious movement in the air that preludes the passing of life; the faithful sister beating against the iron door that shuts her from her brother's torture and death: behind it all there is something unknown yet certain, something too tremendous or too terrible to put into the common words, the common experiences of every day.

So it was, quite surely, when our Lord rode into Jerusalem with the crowds about Him. In His Divine humility He knew what was before Him; and dimly, those who followed Him and loved Him must have felt too the approach of the great crisis of His gospel-life. Something of it they felt when they cried "Hosanna," and more He knew when He said,

"I tell you that if these should hold their peace the stones would immediately cry out." And then, still more piercingly, when He beheld the city and wept over it, "If thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes."

This is a day of contrasts. In the service of the Church we hear how Pharaoh one day cried out, "I have sinned against the Lord and against you; forgive my sin only this once," and then next day his heart was hardened and he would not let the Israelites go forth to serve God. And then we hear again that wonderful scene, when our Lord entered Jerusalem with joyful crowds after Him crying, "Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord;" and then, five days later, the people cried, "Away with Him; let Him be crucified." And there is this contrast, too, when our Lord came within sight of the Holy City, in all His triumph, with the people shouting for Him, and He stopped and He looked at the beautiful city lying at His feet, and He wept.

"If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee and compass thee round and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

He saw it all—all that would come. He saw the proud city besieged. He saw all the horrors of those months when the Roman army shut out all hope. He saw the capture, the butchery. He saw Jerusalem trodden under foot by the Gentiles. He saw it, we may believe, even as now, when the infidels guard the holy places where He suffered, and died, and rose again.

"If thou hadst known." Ah! how different it would have been! If thou hadst not turned from thy Lord and God when He came to save thee!

"If thou hadst known." How often Jesus must have said that! When He looked at the children so bright and happy in their play and yet saw that little selfishness peep out, "I must have this," that little sulkiness or temper or spite; when He saw the young man or woman at work, with the temptation hard by to do this little act of cheating, to say this little lie; when He saw those honest, straightforward, just people whose life, so open and so good before the world, is beginning to be marred by the determination to "have their rights," to say "I will not be put upon: I am just to every one and I will have others just to me," to say "I do this" and "I will not allow that." "If thou hadst known!" And He could see on—how the little sin, how the thought of pride that seems to have in it so much of good, the thought of kindness that is just spoiled by the selfishness behind—how these things would lead, bit by bit, step by step, to the last fall, to the "great refusal."

Ah! if we could see the consequences, we should never do wrong. But He knew, and He wept that the trial which was given to help men to do better, should only end in their utter failure to do well.

Yes, that is the really sad thing about life—that is the meaning of the sense of dread anticipation and of the sense of contrast too. It is not the sorrow and suffering we see around us. It is not the death-beds, it is not the poverty, it is not the long dull pain of so many human lives; because in every one of these God can train a splendid character, from the first sigh of sorrow to the agony of death. He can bring out a beautiful life which will help every one that sees it. He can make every sufferer "more than conqueror through Him that loved us and gave Himself for us." *That* is not sadness. But the contrast between the good things men do, the kind acts they think of, and then their utter pitiable breakdown when the trial comes—*that* is what is sad.

It was a plain, straightforward, serious man who said, "Hell is paved with good intentions"; and he meant, I think, just what our Lord meant when He said "If thou hadst known." There are our good intentions under our feet, they have never come to anything; we trample on them when a burst of passion carries us away; temptation has made us forget everything, and then we are hurried on faster and faster, lower and lower, till the end comes. "If thou hadst known."

My friends, I do not intend to say much to you this

morning. I only want to ask you humbly in the sight of God to think over what this sense of dread anticipation means, and what this contrast means that we find in so many people's lives—the contrast between what they are when they are at the best and what they are when they have let the devil have his way with them. The real, serious, awful lesson of life is just this: that people whom you would think so pleasant, so full of respect for what is good, are all the while just standing on the edge of a precipice: they don't think, they won't think, they go on from day to day till suddenly, when they least expect it perhaps, there comes the trial, the test that God sends into their lives, and they fail. They are weighed in the balances and they are found wanting.

Yes, there are sad things enough in the world, God knows; but it is not the things we see that are saddest, but what we do not see. "Now they are hid from thine eyes," and God sees. If we think about it, I suppose we are all astonished that the people of Jerusalem and the villages about should have known our Lord Jesus Christ, and seen all the good works He did, and heard His noble teaching, and learnt something of His compassion and love, and should have welcomed Him with their "Hosannas," and their delight and praise and happiness and triumph, should have shown that they did know a good man when they saw Him, that they could answer to these demands He was making on their loyalty and their faith, could give their hearts to crying "Blessed is He

that cometh in the name of the Lord," and then, in five days, should join the crowd that cried out for His death, and should stand and watch His crucifixion and call out to mock Him as He died. We can hardly believe it. It sounds impossible, but it is true; and if we look into our own hearts we shall know why it is true. It is the story of many a human life. So long as there is nothing really serious, so long as there is nothing much pressing us either way, so long as things go well with us, we are ready enough to act fairly, to do nothing that men can see to find fault with. But there does come—be perfectly sure of it—a real time of trial to every man and woman on the earth, and how they will stand it depends not so much on what they have done or not done in their lives as upon what they are. What will happen to the ship in the great storm which will send hundreds to the bottom, depends on its strength and firmness in every part. And the soldier, how will he stand those long marches—just the last strain when he feels utterly at the end of his strength? Why, it depends on his moral courage as well as his body. It depends on his heart, if the training of a simple, pure life will enable that to stand the strain; and it depends on his determination, his will, which is behind all life and hangs on what he is. The fact is, when that trial comes—whether it be a great temptation, to do a "great wickedness and sin against God," as it came to Joseph, or whether it comes to us only on our death-bed when we are brought face to face with

God at the last, as we must be,—don't let us forget that,—when that trial comes, everything depends on how we have lived, whether we have followed always, at every risk, the voice of our conscience, the voice of the Holy Spirit of God. Now—what we have to ask ourselves now—in this our day, when that trial that will come upon us is hid from our eyes—is this: "Is our heart right in the sight of God?"

How can you tell? Think. Do you think first every day of what you would like in the routine of life; when your business is over or while it is going on, do you think of doing things as they please you, or do you think of bringing everything now, as it will some day come, before the judgment-seat of Christ? To many people, and I sometimes think to those of us who work hard most of all, the question comes very often, "Will you follow your own pleasure or will you follow Christ?" For people who are very well off, it may seem as if they had so much time on their hands that they could give a great deal of it to God without losing anything of the little happiness or pleasure they would like to have. But to working men and women—and oh! how gently and lovingly Jesus judges them, who was a working man Himself—it does seem as if they must think very carefully and seriously of how they spend the time that is their own. And I think too, when I see a great city of workers, that God will not judge us for our working days if He does not need to judge us for our holidays. And it is not, perhaps, that we spend them badly; I am not talking of drunkenness, and

profanity, and shame, which make us fear when we think of the holidays of some; but could we not spend them so much better? You have holidays in front of you this week. You are here in God's house to-day, singing Hosanna; where will you be on Good Friday? You will be happy, I hope, with your friends on Easter Monday. Where will you be when God calls you to Him on Easter Day?

My brothers and sisters, there is a voice during these solemn days that ought to be always sounding in our hearts, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Every hour, every moment, given to God will help to give you a happiness and peace that perhaps you have never dreamed of before. This is Holy Week: God forbid that we should lay on you a burden heavy to be borne. But can you not—every one—give some time to God that you have not given before? It will help you to bear the trial that will come upon you. It will help you to bear sorrow and to face death. Every one of us needs to prepare for his last hour. I ask you, as your brother and a minister of Christ, to make that preparation every one of you, this week, and to complete it, in the fear of God, on the day in which Jesus Christ died for our sins.

Look forward to-day from Palm Sunday, as He looked, as they who loved Him looked in trembling wonder, to His death, and look forward to your own. Pray that when those days come you may not be among those who have forsaken Him and fled. These great gifts of God to us, imagination, memory, insight,

are given that they may arouse us to the knowledge of the greatest and simplest things in life; retribution, sacrifice, obedience, death, and love which is immortal; that when the call of each comes, it may not come unheeded; that when the last call comes, the call of death, it may be in Love's hand that we go to meet it —the Divine Love which each day has made us to see in faith the things that else were hidden from our eyes.

XIV

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved."—1 Cor. xv. 1, 2.

CLEAR, bold words: part of an argument and an appeal that have rung in the ears of Christians since the day they were first heard in the Church; an introduction to those grand and solemn verses which are known to us Englishmen with a weightier force of pathos year by year as we grow older, for we hear them again and again at the burial of those we honour and those we love.

Perhaps if we were to seek for a summing up in one place of the teaching of that greatest of Christian missionaries, S. Paul, we could not find it better than in the splendid chapter of his first Epistle to Corinth, from which these words come. The Gospel of Christ's resurrection is what S. Paul preached. It is the Gospel in which the Corinthians, if they are to be firm, must stand. It is the belief which, in that wonderful expression which Christianity brought to life and meaning,

is their "Salvation." That was S. Paul's Gospel. Hear it again, when he spoke to the Jews in the synagogue at Antioch (Acts xiii. 32, 33): "And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, how that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that He raised up Jesus." The same Gospel to Jews, to Christian converts, and yet again to those who have never heard of Christ at all: for it is exactly the same thought—Jesus and the resurrection—which is the critical point in the sermon to the Greeks at Athens. God, S. Paul told them, has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He hath appointed, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead. That was what the apostles preached. That is what the Church preaches still—must always preach. That is the good tidings, the Gospel which S. Paul summed up in the words with which I began. If Christ is not raised, he says, our preaching is vain and your faith is vain. There is no Christianity, no religion in any true sense, no God whom man can know, unless there is a resurrection from the dead.

That is really the heart of Christianity. That is what makes it differ from every other religion that has ever been preached to men. They teach—those wonderful religions of the past that we read about in the great books of Greeks and Romans, those still more wonderful religions that exist to-day in the East—that God has appeared on the earth, that man must give up

sin if he is to find happiness; many doctrines indeed that remind us of what we well know in the Christian faith; but the one point where they all fail is in the certainty of the resurrection. Some think of men coming into the world again in different forms, some think of a gradual fading away of every passion till man is merged in the Infinite; but none ever came with the plain, simple, certain message of the apostles of Jesus Christ: because our Master rose from the dead we believe in the resurrection of the body and the life of the world to come.

Modern science cannot give you that certainty, but its wisest teachers will tell you that "personality, persistent individual existence," *must* be "continued" unless "actual existence suddenly ceases," a thing incredible; and they will assure you that "the character and experience gained by us" on earth "become our possession henceforth for ever." We welcome the saying of Sir Oliver Lodge[1]: we do not ask or expect that Science should say more. What is strangely called a "New Theology" will go a little farther and say that "something may still be said for the primitive belief in the manner of the resurrection of Jesus without vitiating any of the principles of the New Theology."[2]

But the Church of Christ has always been able to say more than that; and the reason why Christianity conquered Europe, and *is* conquering the whole world,

[1] *The Substance of Faith allied with Science*, pp. 107, 108.
[2] *The New Theology* (R. J. Campbell), p. 224.

is because we Christians are absolutely certain about the resurrection from the dead. It is so now; it was so in the first days after our Lord lived on earth; it will be always so. Let us look back once more and see where stands our faith.

Nothing can be more plain than that the apostles, when they set themselves to obey their Lord's commands and to go forth preaching His Gospel, were content to rest their claim for belief on their knowledge of His resurrection. There are—we have no doubt they would say—many other things necessary to the full knowledge of true religion—the knowledge of One God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, the knowledge of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, the knowledge of His Atonement, perfect and complete, for the sins of the whole world, the knowledge of the Holy Catholic Church and its sacraments, and the communion of its saints. But first and foremost, the foundation, without which their preaching is vain and men are yet in their sins, is the belief that the Lord truly and really rose from the dead. That that was the teaching of the apostles there ought to be no doubt at all among Christians to-day.

It is quite true that now some who sincerely call themselves Christians doubt, explain away, even deny, the resurrection of Jesus Christ as a fact. So did some, it seems clear, in S. Paul's own day. It is with them he is arguing in the chapter of my text: what is the consequence to us, he says, if Christ be not raised? But he bases his belief, the apostles based their belief, the Church always has based belief, on the *fact*, as a

fact, that Jesus Christ "hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."

Now, before we go any farther, let us say this quite plainly. That fact is the only explanation of the existence and power of Christ's Church. How did the disciples' faith survive the shameful death and the burial of Him Whom they looked to as Messiah? How did those who believed in Jesus ever recover from His crucifixion? How did the Church spring up, vigorous, determined, missionary, within a few days of the end of all the apostles' hopes? How did those who had forsaken Him and fled come back again when their Master had been crucified, and show a boldness and a certainty that they had never shown before? No deception could cause this, no hallucination could cause it, no vision could cause it.

What is the full meaning of immortality, what is the full meaning of eternal life, what is the full meaning of the resurrection, we cannot know; but this we ought to know, if we can know anything at all—that the greatest fact in the history of all time, the life and work of the Christian Church, could not have come into being but for this; that the books most profound, most beautiful, and to man's deepest nature most true —the books of the New Testament—could not have come into existence if they were founded on a delusion, if Christ did not really rise from the dead, but His disciples only thought He did. You cannot grow grapes of thorns or figs of thistles; you cannot base a great truth on a falsehood. S. Paul seized the essential

certainty when he made it the central part of his teaching, not only that Christ after His death and burial appeared to Cephas, to the Twelve, to over five hundred brethren, to S. James, to all the apostles, to himself, Paul, the least of them all; but also and before that, as a certain fact, He really and truly rose from the dead on the third day. If you read those verses again you will see S. Paul associates himself with the preachers from whom our Gospels came; the teaching is the same, the certainty the same. "Therefore, whether it were I or they, so we preach and so ye believed." If ever there were plain words written, if ever words plainly asserted not a vision or a metaphor or a delusion, but a *fact*, they are these: "Now, if Christ be preached that He is risen from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then neither hath Christ been raised; and if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have witnessed of God that He raised up Christ, whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

No delusion, no pious imagination or exaggeration could give the security on which faith builds. "Now

is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."

That was the belief of S. Paul, the belief of the apostles; that is the belief of Christ's Church. Some have doubted and denied, and do still doubt. If any of us are troubled by the doubts and denials, let us remember at least that there is nothing whatever new in them, nothing which writers now say with so much vehemence that others have not said as vehemently centuries ago. And the answer is, the answer always has been, an appeal to the fact, the fact than which very few, if any, facts in the whole history of the world are better authenticated, the fact which S. Paul preached, the belief which Christ's Church holds, that her Lord rose again on the third day.

And then, like all the facts of His life and her creed, like all the teaching which she draws from Him—for apart from Him she can teach nothing—it is not a belief which can be accepted and then left among unheeded things. The resurrection has, must have, for those who are Christians in reality, a *living* force. It is not what ignorant people mean to condemn when they talk of "dead dogma."

A dogma is—I take the meaning from our greatest English dictionary, from Dr. Johnson, who took it from Dryden—an "established principle"; and there can be no such thing as a principle which does not live and work. And the dogma of the resurrection is that upon which everything in Christ's religion depends. S. Paul does not content himself with reminding men

that if it is not true they have no security for Christ's own truth, they are yet in their sins, but he passes on from the certain truth of it, and he says (and it is the very heart of his teaching): "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." That, that is the message we want to-day. God has given us the victory, in Christ, over death: "wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." He does not say: Try to rise to the great height of God's goodness, be moral, be earnest, then you will succeed; he does not say: Put effort first and success as a reward. He does not say:[1] "If you seek, you shall rise." He says: You *are* risen because you are Christ's: the power is there, in you, all of you, sons of God, heirs of the kingdom of heaven, the power is there already; therefore seek those things that are above, therefore be steadfast, unwearied, abounding in the Lord's work, because you *have*, in *His* resurrection, the promise, the knowledge, the possession of *your* resurrection to eternal life. Yes, "to know that Jesus Christ lived and died and rose again from the dead is not Christianity, any more than reading the Bible and going to church is religion. To know that in that wondrous life we each had a part, that in the Incarnation our fallen nature was taken into God, that with Christ we were crucified, with Him were buried, with Him rose on Easter morning, *that* is to

[1] Aubrey Moore, *Advent to Advent*, p. 160.

know the power of Christ's life."[1] There is the fact which every Christian preacher must try to bring home in the Easter weeks. How bright and happy it all seems to some of us, how full our services are of thankfulness to God, how glad we feel, or think we feel, to look forward to the future! But can we? ought we? dare we?

You can only come to Easter through Good Friday. Nearer to each one of us in time is death than resurrection; through the grave, the gate of death, we must go. It is so easy to sing Easter hymns, it is so easy to put away sad thoughts, to think that our religion bids us be happy. Easy; yes, but fatal unless you have put away those things which bring death, those sins of pride, and anger, and selfishness, and sharp words, those unkindnesses that make home miserable; ay, and those sins of which it is a shame even to speak. God sees, God knows, God is not deceived. There is the certain resurrection, thank God; but "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap"—not something else, not peace and happiness from the sins that maim and disfigure life, the sins that come from the world, the flesh, and the devil. When you think of Easter, do not forget Good Friday. When you bless the Lord Who rose from the dead, do not forget the sins which nailed Him to the cross. If we tremble, as I pray God we do, when we think of our sins, in God's name let us, in our bitterest repentance, yet take courage. Those at Corinth to whom S. Paul

[1] Aubrey Moore, *op. cit.* pp. 145, 146.

was writing had a foul and terrible past behind them. But past it was so long as they did not call evil good and good evil, so long as they knew and confessed that it was their sins which had brought the Lord to the Cross. Theirs and ours—our sins. Ah! it is the same Power which is behind Good Friday and Easter Day; the one Power that nothing can conquer—Love. God is Love. Lent is the fast of Love: Easter is Love's feast. *There*, if you have truly repented, if you intend, please God, to lead a new life, is the power for you. Christ has given to us His life and His resurrection. Every time we keep these Easter weeks let us say again and again to ourselves, "Don't give up trying, as so many do; don't dream of despairing, however doubting, or ignorant, or sin-stained you know you are, but go straight on, day by day, praying, trying, following; because, however often you have failed, the victory in the end is quite certain for you, if you persevere, because there is given to you, without any doubt or drawback, the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

We find it very difficult, all of us; but not a few of our difficulties are of our own making. We forget what God *has* given, and that that—not anything in ourselves—is the real security for what He will give. You really long to do right: you really wish to be, in your far-off way, like Christ. He has given you the power; the millions who have tried it since that first Easter have proved it and have known. What was possible—not easy: it was never that—for them is

possible for you and me. There is a future where all their work can be finished: be steadfast, it is not in vain. You are pledged to Christ, and His resurrection, in its power, is pledged to you. For the power of the resurrection means the eternal life of Jesus; it is His Life that His rising again gave, and gives, to us; and about that—whoever doubts in what way He rose—there is no doubt at all; no doubt of the splendour and perfectness of *His Life*; no doubt at all that, if we truly will, it is that which we have come to share; it is that in which we stand; it is that in which, thank God, we are saved.

XV

THE RESURRECTION AND THE INDIVIDUAL

"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping. . . . Jesus saith unto her, Mary."—S. JOHN xx. 11, 16.

A FEW words, and very simple words, yet words very well suited to tune our thoughts to-night. Simple thoughts befit a great day in life: the great things in life are mostly simple, elemental, for they are common to all. The really great things are those in which all men and women share. And the greatest days in the Christian year are those which belong to us all: most of all Easter, for we all must die; and we believe, some falteringly, some securely and with exultation, in the resurrection from the dead. For us all is death; for us all is the life of the world to come.

And the great message comes to simple people. It was not without meaning that our Lord showed Himself first not to the chief of the apostles, but to one who had been among the chief of sinners—a meaning of which the strength and power lives still for us to-day.

Mary stood weeping. I suppose they all felt heart-broken. There is that feeling we many of us have had

when all is done, the illness is ended and the sufferer is at rest, and the eyes are closed and the arms are folded and the hands crossed on the breast, and the body of our beloved is carried to the grave, and the earth has fallen on it and we have gone away. Home that is not like home; life that is not like life; how are we to go on from day to day? It is one of the sad experiences we have to go through; and happy are we if we make it a preparation for the day when we too shall be called away.

The apostles had built such high hopes on the work of their Master. They hoped—they "trusted that it should have been He Who should have redeemed Israel." And now they had seen Him die, or they knew too well (if they had not seen) that He had suffered the last penalty; some of them had been at His burying, and it seemed to be the burial of their own last hopes. He was gone; and they who had left all and followed Him were now thrown upon the world, a hated and despised sect whom men pointed at. "Surely thou art a Galilean, for thy speech bewrayeth thee," and "Can any good thing come out of Galilee?" A week ago they had entered Jerusalem in triumph with their Master, and now He was dead and they were scattered. And they had, too, that most miserable feeling of all—that they had not stood by Him at the last—for "they all forsook Him and fled." He was dead, and they could not tell Him how they loved Him, or beseech His pardon for leaving Him when His trial came.

Then the day's rest—the Sabbath; it can only have been a day of misery and despair. Then the Easter morning; and when they go early to the tomb the worst of all seems to have happened, for the tomb is empty and the Body seems to have been stolen away. They must have thought that the vengeance of the chief priests and the cruelty of the people had pursued Him even after death, and that they had taken His Body that they might treat it like the body of a criminal and a slave.

Nothing was left, not even the little honour of an undisturbed rest in the new tomb which the one rich disciple had given—nothing but despair. Despair. "For as yet," says S. John, "they knew not the Scripture that He must rise from the dead." Easter morning. "Then the disciples went away again to their own homes." But Mary Magdalen stood without at the sepulchre, weeping. If any one despaired surely she most of all! Her Master was taken away, He Who had cast out of her the seven devils of awful sin, and forgiven her, and taken her, the miserable, heart-broken but penitent woman, by the hand and set her among His disciples and by His pure mother.—Ah! what a wonderful thing that was for the love of Jesus to do!—He had gone, and she felt, very likely, how little she was like these good people who had never greatly sinned, who had been with Christ always from the beginning; how little she was like that holy saint who had nursed Him in her arms. She felt that the one Person who had saved her had gone; no one could help

her; what should she do? Perhaps she feared again to fall, again to become the prey of those seven devils of sin.[1] It is a terrible thing to be, as so many people are in England at this moment, the prey of those seven devils. I suppose no one can tell how terrible, but those who have escaped by God's mercy and who dread to fall again.

Mary Magdalen must have felt utterly alone. How much we come, many of us, to depend on persons, or one person, for our religion. There are many people who feel that they can just keep straight so long as they have some one man or woman they rely on to help them; so long as they know some one is thinking of them and praying for them; so long as they know some one who knows everything and yet trusts them. Most of us feel like that sometimes, I dare say. And Mary Magdalen must have felt it; and that one stay was gone. She waited by the tomb and wept. Despair.

But she was just on the point of a great discovery. How often we are, when we are sad! God brings us down into the depths of sorrow; everything seems so black; everything has gone against us, we think; everything we have tried to do has failed; our own friends and households misunderstand. Is it poverty after we've worked so hard and done our very best, or sickness that prevents our working just when we had done so much and got on so well? Whatever it be, one who believes in God should never despair. Sorrow

[1] The identification of S. Mary Magdalen, however, with the woman who was a sinner is, I know, at best, traditional.

we may have, even till it seems as if we could bear it no longer, as if we must break; but despair is not for us if we do in our humble way believe in God and try to love Him. Illness, failure, poverty, certain death just before our eyes: all these things work together for good to them that love God. God is not like man, who takes and tries at a moment and will not give another chance. "No; I've tried him and he won't do." Not like that. God, if we really do turn our hearts to Him, will help. He will understand; He knows our hearts' secrets. He will come and save us.

Mary stood looking at the tomb, and she wept. Not hoping anything, perhaps; hardly thinking; not daring to look forward and not daring to look back. And then in a few moments all those wonderful things happened that S. John tells so vividly. She stooped down and looked into the sepulchre: just one last look, it may be, at the place where she had helped to lay the dead body of Him Who had saved her from worse than death. And then she saw the two angels, and they asked her why she wept; and she did not understand, and she said, quite simply, like a child, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." And even as she said it she turned to go away, for no one could help. And she saw a figure, and she could not recognise it through her tears; the gardener, she thought; perhaps it is not the cruel priests who have robbed the tomb. "Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where

thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." At least I may do that, at least I may bury quietly, where no one shall disturb it, the body of my Master, the Saviour of my life. "Jesus saith unto her, Mary."

Then she knew Him. No one can tell the happiness of that moment. Sorrow, despair perhaps, changed into unbounded delight and glory. Jesus is risen from the dead. No more despair, no more sorrow that He cannot soothe: it is gone. He is immortal. Death is not the end. There is, thank God, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

Now, what does this all mean to us to-night so many, many years after it happened, after Mary Magdalen fell asleep, and all the apostles, and the countless forgiven saints from that morning till this very Easter Day? Why, Jesus Christ is the same now as He was then: He does not change. As He spoke to Mary Magdalen so He will speak to us. Nay, He does speak; He is speaking every moment. Think!

1. He rose not for Himself, but for us. He lived for us, He died for us, He rose for us that we Christians might know, know as certainly as we know that we love and we believe, that we are immortal; that after this life on earth, with all its sorrows and sufferings and sins, there is another in which we may, if we will, live on in the light of God's Presence for ever.

2. And more than that. He does not leave His work in your heart or mine half done. We need not fear, just when we have done, we hope and pray,

a little better, when we are trying to serve Him and yet by some failure fall almost into despair, or when we again break down and go back from what we have promised, that He will leave us to ourselves. Surely it was to show this that He came first to Mary Magdalen, the greatest sinner of them all. How strange it would have seemed to those who did not know what Jesus was, His infinite compassion, His infinite goodness, that He should come first, not to His apostles, not to His own beloved disciples, not to His own mother, but to this poor, sad, struggling, weeping sinner! No; Jesus will not leave us.

We often wonder whether anything we say in the pulpit, or anything we try and do, has the slightest effect on any one single sinner, whether any of those stirrings, those fears, those little hopes of just wishing to be better, that you—every one of you—have in your hearts, will ever come to anything at all. But we do not wonder if Jesus Christ will forget you. For we know quite well that when we feel most in despair, feel most that we have worked quite in vain, that people do not really care, that they will take their own road and go their own way, shutting their eyes and their ears and hardening their hearts; we know quite well, we ministers of God, if we will only think of it, that we ought never to forget that we can do absolutely nothing, that God does everything, that He moves the heart when and how He will, and that He never can and never will desert any single human soul that cries to Him for help.

3. Ah! we see that, don't we, when we remember what Jesus said? He said, "Mary." He knows us each one, separately, as individuals. He calleth His own sheep by name. Every one of us He knows. He knows each woman's sorrow; how hard it is at home, what the trouble is about the husband or the children. He knows what it is that stands in the way of each man, how fiercely he is drawn one way and another, how difficult it is to make things go right, to keep thoughts for God in all the work and the worry and the thousand things to remember and to foresee. God knows it all for every one of us; He knows every minute of our past life, every wish, every prayer, and He does not forget. And He knows the girl's trials and the lad's; how the older people don't seem a bit to understand or to care what it is that is in their minds, what they want, what their real difficulties are and their real temptations are. We most of us feel when we are young that no one really understands us or really wants to help: but God does. How wonderful are His ways of calling, how new the offers of succour and restoration that come every day from His heart! A Mary Magdalen He calls from what the last great English poet, who only yesterday[1] heard the voice which speaks at last in dread summons to all, called in his youth "the roses and rapture of vice." And it may be that He calls her by just that exquisite picture, fresh from His hand, of "a child some sweet

[1] This was preached in S. Paul's Cathedral on the evening of Easter Day 1909. Algernon Charles Swinburne died the day before. R.I.P.

months old," which came in his later life to transfigure the poet's soul:—

> "When grace is given us ever to behold
> A child some sweet months old,
> Love, laying across our lips his finger, saith
> Smiling, with bated breath,
> Hush, for the holiest thing that lives is here,
> And heaven's own heart now near!"

In such way surely our Lord spoke to the dead poet's soul. So may He have spoken first to Mary; so He may speak to us by some picture of infinite purity and grace. For all that we lack is open to His eyes. God does know every need and every wish of every single one of you here, and He will help you—do believe it—to your everlasting good.

He really is—I am not giving you a pretty saying, but a deep, exact truth—He really is your Friend, your best, your truest. Do let that give us all one more help to do better; do let us feel that we cannot hurt Him Who is so good to us, and Who is always thinking of us, by again doing those bad things which we know distress Him to the heart. That at which men sometimes strangely mock is the very strength of our religion to-day—the nearness of God in Jesus as our Friend. For He calls us by name. He knows us and He trusts us, and He will not leave us. Let us fear to wound Him Who is a Friend so generous, so noble, and so true.

My brethren, Jesus Christ will speak to us all one day, at our resurrection, by name, as He spoke to Mary

Magdalen when He Himself was risen from the dead. Oh! let us pray to-night that when He does so speak He will speak in forgiveness, and that He will bring us, by His infinite mercy, to the resurrection of the just.

XVI

THE RELIGION OF A MAN OF LETTERS

"ἔστιν γάρ μοι εὔχρηστος εἰς διακονίαν."
"He is profitable to me in ministry."—2 Tim. iv. 11.

MANY times indeed must the story of Mark's life have been told in this Chapel on this day.[1] I do not propose to go through its chronology. Nor do I intend to offer an opinion on that point about which the doctors now differ, as to whether he was the ὑπηρέτης of the synagogue or of the apostles, the synagogue-minister or the assistant of Barnabas and Paul. It is sufficient for us to know that he was a Jew, a man of position, a Christian in the days of persecution after the Lord's death, a companion in missionary effort both of Peter and of Paul. He lived an active life; and he paid the penalty of it. He saw events vividly; and he suffered as men suffer who so see.

For I take it that we shall consider the evidence quite sufficient for us to accept the Church's identification of the John Mark of whom the Acts and the Pauline

[1] Preached before the University of Oxford, in the chapel of Magdalen College, on S. Mark's Day.

Epistles and the First Epistle of S. Peter write with the author of the Gospel. There is no evidence certainly which makes this impossible, none, I think, which makes it at all unlikely: the evidence at least makes the identification probable.

If that is so, if he who wrote the Gospel was he who learnt from Peter and was the companion also of Paul, how striking an experience was his! No one, we may almost say, illustrates better the peculiar richness of the New Testament as a storehouse of character-types. And that is a richness which we do well not to forget. How divine! we say, when we rise from a study of those books with a heart open to the breath of their inspiration. Ah yes, but how human too! Divine in revelation, and in spiritual insight: it may be that you will consider the two to be but different ways of expressing the same marvellous characteristic of the Scripture. God reveals, man writes, and what he writes—is the insight of it into the things of the spirit his or God's, human genius or Divine inspiration? There, at least, in those profound thoughts which lay bare man's inmost soul, his sins, his aspirations, his destiny, is the eternal character of the record and the appeal: the things that are not seen are eternal, and the voice of appeal transcends our material tests and speaks directly to the heart and to the soul. But there is the other side to the Bible. The New Testament is a book profoundly human. It is rich as no other book is rich in intimate unveiling of character. Men's lives are told, and their characters are laid bare with swift

strokes. If we come to know God in the Divine Face of Jesus Christ, we come to know man too, because the Divine Humanity has flashed upon him a revealing light. And what a gallery of portraits it is! What subtle analysis lies beneath many a sharp phrase which seems only to record a fact, an event in a history, a deed of a man whom we hear of only in his acts! And what contrasts there are, as well as what minute gradations! And among the contrasts, is there any greater than that between those whom this College especially commemorates, S. John Baptist and S. Mark?

In S. John we have the fearless prophet, the man—as we are inclined to say—of the single message, the single idea. His it is to proclaim the advent of the Lamb of God, and to proclaim it as being inseparable from a mighty cleansing of mankind. Religion in his mind, and in his message, is first of all a profoundly moral influence. Its very first claim is a claim of purity of soul, and body, and mind—shown in the simple fulfilment of duty by men in every class and profession, shown in the eternal law of right and wrong in family life. And so his one gospel—the voice which cries "Behold the Lamb of God Which taketh away the sin of the world"—leads him straight to the inevitable sacrifice. His is a life of single-minded, determined, unswerving devotion to the single idea of the coming of the Lord in judgment; and he goes bravely to death for the moral convictions which the knowledge of the Advent involves.

S. Mark's is an utterly different nature and an utterly different experience. To trace his life so far as we can, or rather, to observe the crises of it, and try to judge how they came to him and what impression they left on his character, is to take a striking example from the rich records we have of the thought and experience of the Lord's first disciples. We can see from it how the Gospel of Jesus Christ came to humanity, to regenerate it and transform it; how it took up individual character, strong or weak, commonplace or original, decided and unyielding or easily swayed by currents of feeling, and worked upon it, chastened it, enriched it, developed it, brought it to the perfection of which it was capable. There is the familiar contrast between S. Peter and S. Paul, as sharp as that between S. Mark and S. John: the one sincere and simple and affectionate, rough and hasty, looking at life and its claims always on the concrete side; the other moving in a higher world altogether, among philosophies and the deepest roots of theology, seeking for principles, rejoicing to present an abstract view, to find a synthesis, to elaborate an argument which should satisfy thinkers as well as guide those who fought the practical battle of life. But S. Mark, as I believe, stood apart in character from any of these. He had not the originality of S. Paul, the common ordinary humanity of S. Peter, the stern singularity of S. John Baptist. He was a man of peculiar gifts, of characteristics more common perhaps to-day than in his own time, more academic,

if I may so say, than general. He had the temperament of the man of letters. He saw keenly, clearly, directly; he struggled for expression as men strive to excel in a difficult art. He was a genius: if his is the Gospel that bears his name who can doubt it? He was a great literary artist. Are you disposed to dispute this because he could not write good Greek? Yes, in spite of that, he was a true literary artist, struggling with a language in which he was not at home. The style and character of his record prove this to the full. What force there is in it! How the scenes stand out before us, each in its own setting, the outer picture a part of the record of teaching by word or act. We pass by the sea when Simon and Andrew are casting their nets; we hear the voice of the demoniac cry out in the hushed silence of the synagogue, when the young Teacher's voice is raised with an authority which no scribe could command; we feel the fading glow of sunset when the people stood at their doors and the sick were laid before the Lord for His cool hand to touch them in healing; we see the leper kneel, the crowd that throngs the house even to the door, the poor man's pallet let down from the roof, the multitude listening in the sound of the waves of the Galilean lake. So page by page as the story of the Sacred Life is developed we take into our hearts, with the words of Divine reproof and appeal, some vision of the persons who first heard them, the places where they were uttered, the incidents of the moment that long dwelt in the thoughts of those who had listened

as they watched. How intensely vivid it all is! What an impressionist was the Evangelist, we say, as we put down the book. And when we try to recall the Lord's life as he has told it to us, there start up the descriptive words, the fresh green of the grass, the smallness of the boat, the action of the Divine Hero of the tale as He looked up to heaven, or on the eager faces of those who heard Him; as He sat down and called His chosen Twelve about Him: how He took the little child and set him in the midst of the rough, eager men contending about the greatness which had come to them and which they so little understood, and then took the child in His arms to show them that to receive such in His name was worth more than all the honours they had dreamed of; how, when the mothers brought their little ones to Him again, He took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands on them. Those touches of beautiful humanity lingered in the memory of the impressionable man who perhaps had seen them; or it may be that as Peter told, in the vivid way of the peasant who describes what he has seen, Mark caught up the details and questioned him about them, determined to fix the events on his brain as they really happened, to see them for ever as children see those things their parents tell them of out of their own past lives, scenes already passing from the father's memory but bright and vivid to the son who listens eagerly and pictures the men his father knew and the deeds he wrought in the years gone by, and so the old tales are told

again and again; as when the Moor spoke of his disastrous chances and "moving accidents by flood and field" while the greedy ears devoured up the discourse.

Certainly the man who set these things down in this striking way had seen them, at least in his mind's eye. He is pictorial and dramatic, but it is the living picture of the world we know, the drama for which the whole world is the stage and all its men and women merely players. For it is not mere scene-painting in which this Evangelist excels: the setting does not overpower the effect of the very act, the very word, the very thought, that lies beneath it. So the Lord's words have the directness of a speaker Who is alive before our eyes. The voice of command is emphatic and personal: "Thou deaf and dumb spirit, come out of him, I charge thee, and enter in no more"; "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." The voice of entreaty is personal too in its appeal: "Come ye yourselves apart, and rest awhile," or "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye here, then, and watch." So the Lord's acts have the power of His Godhead and the weakness of our human nature too. He Who wrought the wonders was He Who hungered and needed rest, Who sighed and lamented, Who felt anger and grief, Who longed to be alone. The man who wished above all things to write true history would set these things down beside each other, knowing that truth will be its own witness.

Nor does S. Mark's interest cease apart from the central Figure of his tale. He tells us with vivid sympathy what the disciples felt, how they were chosen, how trained, how they answered to the training, how they failed, where there was weakness, where disloyalty, where betrayal. He tells us of how those with whom the Lord spoke, outside His own companions, answered to His words, or failed to respond; how they beset Him with questions, escorted Him in triumph; who it was that ran eagerly to Him and kneeled and then went sorrowfully away; who went very early to His sepulchre, and what bright vision they saw on the right of the place where He had been laid. That, and much more, we remember in the Gospel which at first sight is the simplest as it is the shortest of all. Truly it is a "transcript from life," and a transcript such as only an artist in literature could make.

And behind all this detail, behind this intense force and vigour, lies the aim of the man who is strengthening his belief on *fact*, who is eager to escape from abstractions, to appeal to something very definite and concrete, about which there shall be no dispute, which there shall be no two ways of looking at, which shall be plain and distinct and convincing. Great are the words of the Lord; but great most of all in the directness of their appeal. Whether they condemn, or encourage, or command, there is no doubt about their meaning. They have at the back of them the strength of fact, of the Lord's deeds, which are in

action the expression of His unconquerable Truth. That is the Gospel of Mark: a Gospel of witness to the Divine energy, seen in living power of deeds among men.

There lies the strength of this man's character. What he can see so vividly for himself and picture for others in such sharp distinctness, makes him the willing disciple of the Lord, the follower of His apostles without hesitation or delay. So in the Acts of the Apostles he appears first as a member of a Christian family, whose mother's house was a meeting-place for prayer, perhaps the very house where an upper room had been hallowed by the Lord's Eucharist before He suffered. To this house comes Peter when the angel had opened the doors of his prison, to the home where he would be welcome, to the friend and disciple who listened most eagerly to his words, learnt his special teaching, and became, in close affection, to him as a son. Next, when Paul and Barnabas, after fulfilling the mission entrusted to them, had been to Jerusalem to render account, and then went back to Antioch, it was Mark whom they took with them, as one who knew both the life of the Christian Jews and the life of the Roman world outside Judæa, to which they were now called to bring the good tidings of the salvation of Christ. So when Paul and Barnabas went to Cyprus and began the work in earnest of Gentile conversion and of the foundation of Churches which were to be Catholic as part of one universal Church in which there was to be neither Jew nor Greek, Mark

was with them to attend and help. He began the work; but then came the difficulty. John Mark the Jew, trained to the work of the synagogue, and yet with some knowledge of the life of Roman civilisation, was not prepared to go so far as the genius of Paul would lead. It is the very separation which naturally comes between the man of genius, original, practical, and creative, and the man of literary gift, assimilative but not original, with a keen eye for facts, open to visible practical impressions but not able to look beyond into a wider world of which he has no experience, and which indeed is a world still to be made, which only the true prophet can see before it comes into being. To S. Mark the conditions of Christian work were such as he had seen, he thought, in the beginning, under the Lord Himself. There was the proclamation of the gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: outside it there was the welcome of proselytes, the benediction of charity, but still the roots of the Church must, he thought, be always in Jerusalem. Back to the rock whence he was hewn he must always look; back to the cradle of the religion which had found and mastered him when the Lord first called. He who had dwelt upon the sure foundation of fact, of action, deeds such as the Christ had wrought on earth, was perplexed in the presence of what seemed a new principle. Divergence of view, discussion as to the claims of Gentile and Jew, a departure from the region of plain fact and such precedent as he knew into the region of principle, into

new fields altogether as it seemed, left him confused, hesitating, unconvinced. He stood, it would seem to himself, on the old ways which were so firm, he thought, in what Peter had told. There comes out the temperament of the man of literary gifts but without original genius. He was honest: he could not go beyond what he had seen so vividly. He was sensitive, unprepared for the great outburst of volcanic energy in the genius of a missionary leader, the greatest in the world's history. He could only stand by what he knew, and go back to the home whence all that he had learnt had come; and so Paul and his company set sail from Paphos, and John Mark returned to Jerusalem. And then came, one cannot but believe, the closer association between S. Mark and S. Peter, in which both stood apart from—and yet not hostile to—the work of S. Paul; apart in the strength of their conservative religion, the religion which as it seemed added the force of Christian grace to the tradition of the old covenant, the religion in which there was no break, but a fulfilment, of the coming of Jesus the Messiah. It is the typical position of the man whose root-interest is a literary one. He sees the splendour of the past: he is always acknowledging, like Marcus Aurelius, what he owes to those who came before him: he cannot separate himself from them: he feels that what true progress means is not to originate but to combine. And so he stands, as the years go on, almost in isolation. The sounds of past songs of triumph are still in his ears, the glory of past victories, the memories,

the traditions of the great days which the world, he believes, will never let die. And to these he adds his own personal experience of the greatest Teacher he has known or can conceive. And as he thinks on the past his hold on the present slips from him; to the future he cannot stretch out a hand, for he looks into darkness, and looks with alarm and distrust. That is the danger: yet it is a danger he may avoid.

For yet he possesses that most precious of all gifts, an open mind. The past does not close his heart to new impressions; his ears are still open to the appeal of truth, when he hears it. And so again Mark goes to Cyprus, and he goes with Barnabas, the son of consolation, the preacher of love and reconciliation. There still Christ is preached in the old home, and Cyprus is the meeting-place of the old faith and the new transcending power of Christ.

And gradually the thought expanded. From Cyprus, it may be, the work spread to Egypt. There, in face of an ancient civilisation and an ancient religion which seemed to show all the weakness that lies in unyielding traditionalism, Mark, we may naturally suppose, was shown forcibly that Christ had came to make all things new—that Rome and Alexandria and Jerusalem had all their part to play in the new world which was being called into existence before his eyes. He has the power of assimilation: impressions are vivid, and sink into his soul. And so there comes at length the lesson, slowly learnt and yet truly, of receptiveness. The two subtle influences of time and prayer have

their perfect work, and Mark becomes again the companion and now the "solace" of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. A fellow-worker again, as on that first missionary journey, now in the restraint at Rome: the words S. Paul uses of him show, one may well think, that there was reconciliation also with Barnabas; and again we find him also a fellow-worker with S. Luke. As one thinks of Mark now at Rome as Paul's companion, now again in Asia preaching the word as Paul would have preached it, to men of every race in all the freedom of the Church's claim, one thinks of the lines in which Christina Rossetti has summed up in prayer just such a grace and such an experience as must have been his:—

"Grant us such grace that we may work Thy Will
And speak Thy words and walk before Thy Face,
Profound and calm, like waters deep and still:
Grant us such grace.

Not hastening and not loitering in our pace
For gloomiest valley or for sultriest hill,
Content and fearless on our downward race.

As rivers seek a sea they cannot fill
But are themselves filled full in its embrace,
Absorbed, at rest, each river and each rill:
Grant us such grace."

The last words of S. Paul about S. Mark are the rich but simple benediction which is all that can be claimed for the highest literary gift: "He is profitable to me in

ministry." That is indeed all that the scholar who is servant of Christ can hope to win. Just to study, and think, and pray, to do the work set before him diligently, to see questions plainly, to face them candidly, to accept the truth sincerely: that is all, and if God rules the world, there can be no higher calling, no higher blessing than this.

It involves no fancied pride of consistency. The man who wishes to know the truth that the truth may make him free must be content to bear the scorn that narrow minds pour on him to whom the outer garb of consistency does not rank with the inner truthfulness which always "follows the gleam." A man like Mark will always learn; and he has the heroism—for men seem to think it such—which is not afraid to own that he has been wrong. He will learn, and see, and then act. First he accepts truth, and in the light of it he questions all the new things that come before him; and so, though it be slowly, he comes to a wider truth still. But the strength has come all along from that first surrender to Christ: "whither Thou goest I will go": and so year by year, age by age, the Christian and the Church go forward into the light. Hardest of all it is to part from friends who also seek the truth; but then there is the certainty that some day, in God's time, the union will come again. Now, the partial knowledge may sever us: then, there will be a meeting again, when through Christ we know even as we are known. That is the crown of rejoicing to which the scholar may look forward: that, we do not doubt, was

the thought of the benefactors of old, when they sought for the children of their benevolence to follow in the way of S. Mark. Learning, the gift of literature, is to be the true reconciling force, because Truth is One. And for us is the task on which the glory of a true humility rests, to be profitable for ministry.

Mark as he stood by Peter when the shadows closed around him; Mark, the old, sturdy, eager apostle's "son," has upon him at the last just that crown of faithful service—to have been profitable. To hold firmly to truth as you see it—not to surrender the treasure committed to you for the sake of peace—not to yield it even to those whose honesty you know to be sound as your own, whose powers perhaps you know to be higher, whose leadership it seems almost a disloyalty to reject—that is the claim on us—that is the sacrifice we may have to offer to the highest. My brethren, I need not apply these words to our own days, to our public difficulties, not even to our private struggles here in our own lives in the midst of a great University which we cannot order always as we will. But the lesson of Mark's life may be always full of assurance for us. If we are loyal we need not fear. We need not fear division, loss of friends, misrepresentation, hardship, suspicion, the very humiliation of rejection by those we honour and love. Only be loyal, only strive to see clearly, and never to act where the sincere soul will not commend our action,—and then at least we have that great blessing for our epitaph

from our Lord Himself—"He is useful to Me for ministry."

That blessing which was Mark's we pray for for this great University, for this beloved College, yes even, unworthy though we are, for ourselves: so let our witness be borne and so handed down in the name of the all-loving and all-merciful God.

LAW AND LIFE

XVII

VENTURE THE LAW OF THE NATURAL WORLD[1]

"He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap."—ECCLES xi. 4.

WHAT a depressing chapter that is from which those words come! A jaded man's outlook on life. Not the look of an old man, I think, for that is usually much stronger and wiser; but the look of a middle-aged man, who has tasted many experiences and suffered many disappointments, and is ready, even eager, to sum them all up, for the benefit of other people, in a tone of cynical worldly wisdom, touched at last by a higher thought—which comes so abruptly, as if he had just hit upon a way of escape—in those splendid words, "Fear God, and keep the commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." And yet they also have, one thinks, a little touch of bitterness about them. "For God," he says, "shall bring every

[1] Preached in S. Giles's Church, Reading, before the Hon. Mr. Justice Jelf, His Majesty's Judge of Assize, on Wednesday, October 13, 1909, as Chaplain to the High Sheriff of Berkshire (W. Dockar Drysdale, Esq.).

work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." How easy to tell a man to keep God's commandments, when you know perfectly well he has not done so; and how little hope you give him when you remind him that God sees, and will bring to judgment, every smallest defection from the right.

Yes, it does seem a most depressing lesson,—those two chapters of Ecclesiastes. And it seems to answer so truly to experience. The youngest of us knows what it is to be misunderstood, and to have life spoiled by the thought of it; what it is to fail, and to slacken all effort to do well because of the disappointment with one's self and the difficulty of the task of improvement; what it is to sin and to find the memory tainted and the aspiration dulled: because one has done wrong, to begin to forget to do right. And, recklessly though we live in the present, there must be few who do not feel sometimes a sense of dissatisfaction with it all: what is your life really worth, with all its amusements or its work, its athletics or its pleasures of learning and knowledge? So a voice says often, —we do not forget it,—in the ears of the young. The ways of the heart and the sight of the eyes: truly there is a judgment for them even now. Verily, childhood and youth are vanity. And perhaps already some have begun to look beyond: for if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they are many. There are times when none of us wonder at the con-

clusion: Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.

But, after all, the preacher, gloomy and cynical though he may be, does not end there. He does not remain in his disappointment and indifference, and let things take their course. On the contrary: the very next words, after the bitter conclusion that all is vanity, are, "Moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge."—It is worth while going on, after all, disappointing though the world is: because there is something stronger and more lasting than all this failure and vanity. Where does the preacher find the remedy for all this weakness of man which even the young feel now and then and the old know so bitterly? He finds the clue in the simplest things of life—the things out of which the common people make their wise saws. "Yea, he gave good heed, and sought out and set in order many proverbs."

So it was with our Lord Himself. He showed the acts of His power in common things; He drew His lessons from the simplest operations, and the familiar experience, of man. And what is at once both most simple and most common is the work of the fields. How our Lord continually draws His deepest lessons from the sowing and the reaping, the good soil and the bad, the flowers and the corn, one may say the weather and the crops. It is as though He said—Indeed, these difficulties are real, and not to be made light of, but it is the common things of life that will help you when you are puzzled and dismayed. "He that observeth

the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." Exactly parallel to all these difficulties and disappointments that you have in your life, in your intellectual life, in your moral life, in your ambitions and your loves, and in the deep things of the soul, are the difficulties and disappointments that come upon men in ordinary out-of-door, workaday life. They have been disappointed often enough; again and again they have failed. But they know well enough that if they were to be always apprehensive or discouraged, things would go from bad to worse: experience does, in some strange way, contradict and counteract disappointment. It is not the thought of fear that survives in the man who really knows what life is, but the thought of hope. Never mind the signs of wind and weather against you, but go straight on. Sowing shall be rewarded after all with the reaping-time.

That, my brethren, is true for us: let us remember it to-day, when we meet in ancient solemnity for that task which no thinking man can contemplate without awe. To find out the truth between man and man, to judge man, to punish, is part of the prerogative of Almighty God. Yet, we humbly believe, He admits us to it. He lays it on us not to bear the sword in vain, the sword that divides, the sword of justice and the right.

We judge, but our judgment is not final. And as we judge we fix our eyes on Him Who died to save us, and Who lived—yes, Who lives—to teach. For so it is with the things of God. You are not to think of Him solely in the guise of stern moral law, of a power

of righteousness which is strong against the evil-doer and avenges every failure and every sin; but also in His loving Fatherhood, "for it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." He knows us far better than any height of self-knowledge we can attain to. When He punishes it is in sorrow for us and shame: He rejoices in our successes and our happinesses, and He sets up before us, in the visible world around, a pattern of inextinguishable hope.

That is the lesson which Christ brings us out of those words of Ecclesiastes: not to go into the world (or to leave it either) with the thought of fear, but with the thought of hope. We are saved by hope. How true that is in every side of life: will it not be true beyond what we now see? Turn back to common experience; the Bible is always reminding us of that. Look at life as a whole, and there emerges this wonderful fact, that the world goes on and is watched over by God, showing perpetual beauty and astonishing power through struggle and continual resurrection to higher things. For what God looks for is a beginning, a stir of life, a readiness to take risks and go out into the world in the same spirit as that in which the universe itself seems to work. Sometimes the hope is almost blind; yet hope it is. That is the hope God gives us for those who seem humanly speaking to have no chance—savages who live like beasts, or the outcasts of our civilisation, here in the midst of us in England to-day, whom we shame to think of, and sadly know that part of their sin is our own and yet know not how to lift it.

There may be in them some germ of purity and kindness, some glimmer of penitence that leads to hope, and that the Spirit of God seizes upon, and cherishes, and brings up to success and reward.

And so even with ourselves. Those who meet together on the business of an Assize will look, if they are true men, into their own hearts too; and even there disappointment fades when we throw ourselves upon God: failure even is better than dull acquiescence. There is only no salvation where there is no effort. God sees and cherishes the very humblest things done in the spirit of venture of which Christ is Leader and Pattern, though they be poor things that seem to have been but vanity of vanities.

> "All instincts immature,
> All purposes unsure
> That weighed not as man's work yet swelled the man's amount,
> Thoughts hardly to be packed
> Into a narrow act,
> Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
> All I could never be;
> All men ignored in me;
> That I am worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped."

That is certainly the lesson of the world of common life; and I think it is the justification for human punishment. The root of life lies in the will: turn that, even though it be sharply, to the right, and then venture, and the reward, however strangely, will yet certainly come.

And so, as we set about our business, we pray, as

the Church has prayed for centuries with unfading hope: "Stir up, we beseech Thee, the wills of Thy faithful people that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of Thee be plenteously rewarded."

XVIII

VENTURE THE LAW OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

"If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—S. John viii. 31, 32.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ continually appealed to men as individuals, one by one. He knew what was in man; He met man face to face, and claimed him for His own. It is quite true, and it must never be forgotten, or we lose a very great deal of what He designed for us, that He provided, for those who should follow Him, the Divine home and shelter of the Church, that He made the perfection of the Christian character attainable only in the corporate and living union of the Brotherhood which is His Body, the union, part by part, with Himself. It is quite true that to His Spirit, through the teaching of His Apostles and Saints, we owe the perfected ideal of citizenship, the grandest thing the world can ever know, transmuting the idea of world-empire into the richer truth of "the whole Body fitly framed and knit together by that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due

measure of each several part, making increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love." But there is no contradiction between this and the ideal of true individuality; and Christ constantly, in all His teaching, through all His life on earth, up to the end—even on the cross itself—appealed to each man as free and unique and inestimably precious in himself. He loved His own individually, and so He loved them unto the end.

And as He loved, He appealed to them by, and He taught them to value, the imperishable gift of individual freedom, and with that the inalienable sacredness of every human soul. All things are yours; Christ's religion is a religion of light; there is nothing He has which He would keep back from you. He sets it all before us; He calls us each, one by one, to come forward and take it, to see with our own eyes, handle with our own hands, the priceless treasures of truth. So He urged, again and again, with insistent earnestness and unhesitating certainty, that we must be bold, and original, and genuine; that we must seek truth with undivided wills, and righteousness with a true hunger and thirst. It is only those who thus seek that will be rewarded; it is only they who can attain. The divided will, the half-hearted search—these are doomed to inevitable failure. Man can only reach his true freedom if he seeks it with his whole heart, if his model is the supreme honesty, even to the death, of Christ the Son of God. "If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Fitly we repeat those words on an Ember Day, when our prayers are specially asked for those who are to be ordained as ministers of Christ.[1] There could not be a summing-up more emphatic and illuminating of all that He came to do and to teach. He came to set man free from the bonds and shackles that surround him and cripple him; to show that worldly circumstances, poverty or wealth, strength or illness, are not the true measure of man's life, but that beyond these there is a great gift of individual personality, and that true living is to find the meaning of that, in the freedom of mind and soul.

Read the Gospels and you cannot help seeing that what men learnt from Christ was to be themselves—not bound by convention, or fashion, custom of unintelligent respectability, tradition of ordinances which only restrict and confine, but that each man, in his own individual gifts, had his own splendid opportunities, his own unique powers of development put into his own hands, and that the voice of the Father was perpetually calling him to use them to the utmost, and so to rise into the glorious liberty of the children of God. So to rise; for rising at all does mean a clear aim and a real discipline; we cannot win freedom unless there has been restriction and restraint. What terrible tragedies there are that force us to remember that, God knows; we cannot forget, but we can trust the mercy of the compassionate Father of all good.

[1] Preached at a special Lenten service at Lincoln's Inn Chapel on March 10, 1911.

Well, there in that idea of restraint lies such truth as there is in the bold assertions which have lately been made as to the limits of Christ's Church, that bonds should be made stricter, nominal Christianity swept away into practical heathendom, and our feeling be "one of gratitude that so many have left us."[1] We may well forget the abruptness with which such things are said, for it may be they are said thus only to startle the self-sufficient complacency which is the danger of us all. Let us look to the fact which underlies them. Man can only reach the freedom of Christ's truth if Christ is truly his model, if he really takes Christ for Master and abides in His Word; for it is thus only that he can attain to his own true development. No teacher ever knew as did Christ what was in man; no one could know and secure as He the value and the future of each single soul.

Some think that to-day the greatest danger lies in unchecked individuality. If it were so—and it is a danger timid ages always fear, and ours is a very timid age—yet it is a danger Christ would have us run. When the world opens before each of us, when new thoughts come and new difficulties arise, He certainly would not have us be afraid. He would have us sure in our own souls. That is a point on "the human outlook" which we must not dare to ignore. Let me use the words of one of our scientific teachers;[2] he

[1] Figgis's *Religion and English Society*, p. 29; cf. Hobhouse's Bampton Lectures, *The Church and the World*.

[2] Sir Oliver Lodge, *Reason and Belief*, p. 145.

calls them "a personal caution." "As to our own souls, we are fully responsible. We can at least control them. Let us not seize explanations that can be given for the failure of the race and apply them to our own undoing. We who have attained the gifts of thought, of perception, of clarity of vision, we are not to be at the mercy of surroundings, however deleterious their influence may be, and however much they may be pleaded in mitigation of judgment on behalf of the average of mankind. We can be free, not enslaved." Yes, for Christ says to us as clearly as He said to His first disciples, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Only be sure it is truth you are really seeking, and do not fancy that by following a freedom you do not rightly use you can reach the truth you do not know. No! The process cannot be reversed; it is truth you must be seeking and freedom through truth; you can grow into your full freedom only if you are using every power that makes you yourself, separate from any other, in the pursuit of truth.

That is Christ's message to the young. But a time comes to most of us when we find that life is not what we thought it was—it is infinitely more difficult, and there are many things which we once thought simple, or never thought about at all, for which we can now find no explanation. Yet if you are trying to discover your true self you will distrust all simple explanations, because you will see the complexity of truth. You will not be atheist, or what people once called agnostic,

because you will see that these are positions of intellectual and moral darkness. You wish to know the truth, and your very wish makes you certain it can be known. You are confident that your own self can work out into something truer and better, and that the truth you seek will give you full freedom for yourself. And you will see as your knowledge grows that "scepticism narrows the real problem"[1] and avoids facing facts as they are. There are still many to whom it may be said, "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy," and it is our business, if we are truth-seekers, to see those things face to face. All through life it is the same, and perhaps most truly when sorrow touches us and shatters the supports that have begun to hide our own individuality from ourselves. That is a wretched life indeed which is not dependent on others, and yet when sorrow and bereavement come, or when we are sent out into a new world away from old ties, helps, safeguards, there comes also that lesson which every one, to be true, must learn, which Christ's life supremely teaches, that "one's self is purely one's own, and that no one can help one."[2] No one, but He in Whom we live and move and have our being.

Do I seem to have wandered far from my text? I do not think I have; for what Christ was continually telling His disciples was that they had made a great venture when they came to Him, a great venture on behalf of their own real selves, and in search of that

[1] *Life of Bishop Creighton*, ii. p. 408. [2] *Ibid.* p. 410.

truth which with all their hearts they longed to know. If we are prepared for that venture, ready to enter on that search, Christ will welcome us too, for it is in the way of Him alone, the true Man, that the venture and the search can be made. Be yourself, He says; work out your own salvation. Do not, when you are in a new world, among new aims, conflicting interests, strange ideals of life, take tone from them, unless they appeal to your best self. You must, if you are to win truth and freedom, stand, in the inner core of your being, alone. So Christ told men to leave even father and mother, and cleave to Him. So He said to those who were trembling when they thought of being alone, "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the Gospel."

It sounds a hard word, but it is the word which must be heard by all truth-seekers. And when it is heard, when we are thrown back upon ourselves, we must remember that as we press forward we need never lose—we must never lose if our search is to be the work of the whole man, the true self—anything which is good and holy that we have ever learnt.

The search for truth is, like all those great quests the romancers tell of, by a perilous path strewn with failures and beset with tragic deaths. It is so in natural science, in politics, in art; it is so not a whit less in religion. The man has crippled himself, has made success impossible, who forgets that his prayers, his communions, his repentances, his deep and wondering thoughts of God were, with all their imperfections,

by far the finest, and the most serious, and the truest things he knew. They, those thoughts, those experiences, went down to the foundations of his individuality, to the real heart of his life. He must take them with him if he is to find truth and be free. Religion, as Bishop Creighton said,[1] "is not one out of many explanations of life: it is life itself." No man will ever find truth who loses the sense of awe and reverence; no man will ever be free who has not to the full a deep feeling of responsibility for all he learns and does and is. There are some lessons, if we are to go through with this quest, we must never forget; and the chief of them is the lesson of the life of Jesus Christ. Many things we may have to leave behind. Often we may have to stand alone. But the deep principle of those great words can never fail us: "If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

[1] *Life of Bishop Creighton*, ii. p. 195.

XIX

THE CHRISTIAN RULE OF LIFE

"Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."—S. Matt. xxii. 21.

EVERY reformer must be met by such criticism as came to our Lord. What are you going to do really? What is your meaning behind your fine speeches about the rights of man, or the right to work, or a living wage, or justice? Or, what is your theory of the relations between Church and State? How far should private morality govern nations? Who is to decide in the long run what a man may do or may not do—the individual, or the State, or the Church? If the time is out of joint, how do you propose to set it right? And, if your views are carried out, what will become of what people call vested interests and cherish so carefully? Or, what will become of the ordinary root morality—that which we believe has been the true basis of the State—if your theories of liberty have scope?

These questions are, perhaps, even more present now when some, by rigid definition, or exclusion, or concentration, would make the State more secular or the

Church more ecclesiastical. These questions I say are, perhaps, even more present now than they were when Jesus Christ was on earth. And something of an answer to them all may surely be found in His reply to that question of temptation so politely introduced and so ensnaringly framed: "Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one, for Thou regardest not the person of man. Tell us, therefore, what thinkest Thou? Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?"

Our Lord never answered a question, as we read the Gospel record, simply as if it were a thing of present interest, some difficulty that had momentarily arisen, and could be settled in a moment and done with. He always views every question, in the old phrase, *sub specie æternitatis*. He makes His questioners see that life is eternal, that every single thing they do has its part in that life, that what they do should be done in the knowledge that it will have its results on every other thing that they do or think. You must not cut off life into parts and think one thing one day and another the next. Indeed you cannot. Life is one, and no human power can split it up. So when you ask what are your duties towards society, you must ask with your thought also on what are your duties towards God; because you cannot live one side of life rightly unless you live the other side rightly also. "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."

So one may say, with reverence, that politics did not interest our Lord in themselves, but as part of religion.

There are two kinds of people in the world, those who think that the world exists for them, and those who know that they themselves exist only as part of something immeasurably vast and great. Nowhere do you see the difference more plainly than when you look at young people first beginning a life for which they have just become fully responsible. At no time does the question need more plainly pressing home, Do you live for yourself or for something beyond? But the choice recurs again and again all through life. Is the world a great store out of which you go and take what you want? Are you determined to have your own choice, your own work, your own amusements, your own friends? It seems possible just to choose, to put out your hand and take; and so the sense of responsibility fades away, and whether you are very active and energetic, or very idle and sluggish, your life is a failure. It is not lived in its true setting. You have never been able to say truly to God, "Thou hast set my feet in a large room."

But there is another view. Life is not something made for you, or the world full of things to pick and choose in. It is a stupendous system whose Maker and Builder is God. When you begin the day, your prayers help you to learn how you are to correspond to God's purpose for you, what is your place in the whole and how you are to fill it. How well it was

said by a great American Bishop,[1] "To one man God is a vast means working for his comfort; to another man God is a vast end to which his powers strive to make their contribution."

Now you will never make anything of life or of any work or part in it, scholarship, music, painting, history, or even criticism, unless you take the widest view of it and relate what you have to do to something far greater than what is already in existence. The man who is great is not he who has principles of his own, but he whom great principles have seized upon and possess and control. The man whose life is worth living is he who welcomes great principles and lets them lead him into all the truth. The man who is a true Christian is he who gives himself to Jesus Christ and says, "Lord! what wouldst Thou have me to do?"

So we may look at the question and answer about the tribute money in what is, perhaps, to us, a new and a wider way. Jesus looked at the beautiful coin of Tiberius, a triumph of delicate art which we cannot equal in our designs to-day, and said it must belong to Cæsar, for there was Cæsar's face and title. He looked at man, and for image and superscription there was that *fiat* of Almighty God: "And God said, Let us make man in Our Image, after Our Likeness. . . . So God created man in His own Image; in the Image of God created He him." Cæsar's mint made the money, and to him it shall go back: God made man, and to

[1] Phillips Brooks.

Him his soul and body shall return. On the body is stamped the impression of the Lord.

The Church caught up that great idea and worked it into the very foundation of her faith. When men say to you that it does not matter what you do with your body, the witness of all the Christian ages cries out that it is not true. The body is for the Lord and the Lord for the body. "Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? God forbid. Glorify God, therefore, in your bodies."

"Render to God the things that are God's." That in one word is the Christian rule of life. "Ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." And in practice that makes the whole difference to how you and I may live. I do not mean that we shall live without failures. On the contrary, we shall continually realise how pitiably we fall short of what we ought to be, and fail in what we ought to do. But not ours is the futile life. His is the futile life who thinks to mould things to his choice, himself as well as others, and make the world about him go the way he wills. Ours is as members of Jesus Christ to render to God ourselves, who are God's, to do as He wills, to follow where He leads.

I am not talking in the air. I am speaking plain truth, which is proved by the happy life of thousands. "Choose Thou my lot for me," though it is hard, God knows, to say, is never said in vain. Some of you may

find things hard to understand now, or right things hard to do. If you do not now, certainly you will. But in spite of all discouragements, dare to believe in good, and in power—that is, in God. Get outside yourself, and throw yourself on Him in Whose image you are made, and then—He will take the offering. Your whole outlook and endeavour and achievement will be changed. Everything you do will be done with a new purpose and will receive a new blessing. The things of this life will be immeasurably greater and happier to you, because they are part of that wider life which is eternal, because it is God. You will learn what those great words mean, that may have lain old and dusty among your memories, half forgotten because never understood, that you are a "member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven."

One word more. "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." The text comes with a special meaning to us in this church to-day.[1] There are with us those who come now, as year by year in the past, to show how they have taken that text for their motto. They offer, as volunteers for the defence of their country, their service to the King and Nation, and they declare by their presence here that they hallow it in the House of Almighty God.

And yet, again, your alms are asked for the waifs

[1] Parade Service of "The Queen's Westminsters," Westminster Abbey, Sexagesima, 1911.

and strays of our civilisation,[1] pitiful children, from whom, if our help enables them to grow up true men and women, the State may take its tribute of loyal work, and God have His meed of consecrated offering.

So when you think truly of Cæsar, you must think truly of God. You cannot serve man truly, unless you serve God too. So true is it, as Crashaw said—

> "All we have is God's, and yet
> Cæsar challenges a debt;
> Nor hath God a thinner share
> Whatever Cæsar's payments are."

You cannot serve God truly, unless you serve man too. If that is a commonplace now, it is Jesus Christ Who made it so.

[1] There was a collection for the Church of England Society on behalf of Waifs and Strays.

XX

VISION AND KNOWLEDGE

"And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see."—2 KINGS vi. 17.

A STRIKING scene; an impressive memory; from days of trouble and distress. War surges round the little kingdom of Israel, and each attack is frustrated, for the soldiers seek counsel of the prophets at each point of the defence. The keen eye sees; the bright intelligence, matured in the experience of prayer, looks across the boundary line of race-hatred and images the plans of the foe: and Israel, by the foresight, saves himself "not once nor twice." Then, the brain that inspires this skill into the feeble little nation to defy the chariots and horses and the great host of Syria must be stilled, says the Syrian king. The command is carried out; and when the boy-disciple of the prophet, the lad who followed him to learn the wisdom of the Lord, was risen early to look from the walls upon the stretching plain around, "behold, an host with horses and chariots was round about the city." There was no escape—the timid lad thought: contemplation, it may be, had unstrung his nerves: he had not the

courage of the body, still less the higher courage of the soul. He told his master with the trembling terror of one who has lost faith in the highest that he has known. "Alas, my master! how shall we do?"

Then the great, the dramatic lesson, that spiritual power is greater than all material force; that character is supreme; that the care of God rules behind all outward seeming. The man of God who walked with his Divine Master in humble obedience could answer fearlessly: "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

"And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

All vision is given of God—the poet's, statesman's, artist's, and the vision of the prophet of the Lord. It is the vision of the man of God that is the salvation of the world. To see clearly, to see as God sees, through the veil: that is the gift of immortality which He reveals to them that love Him.

A superlative gift indeed. Every slightest touch of it raises the possessor above his fellows to the choice company of the greatest of the ages.

There is in one of the English palaces which our late Queen gave to the use of her people a set of nine pictures which thousands of Englishmen have looked upon with the sense of a deep impression. They are Mantegna's "Triumph of Cæsar," and the great artist

who painted them four centuries ago has made them a representation of the might and majesty of the great Roman Empire of old time. As he sat and pondered, in all the light which the outburst of new life which we call the Renaissance had poured upon the Italy of his day, with the thoughts of the ancient poets, and historians, and philosophers thronging about his mind —as he looked back and tried to realise, from sculpture and architecture and the work of craftsmen in metal, and ivory, and clay, what the life of the old world was like, a vision came to him, and he *saw* the great Empire, which had trained and tempered the nations as a man trains a wild animal and tempers the steel which is to be the safeguard of life. He saw the old Rome, and by his art he made the vision immortal. Still the representation lingers in something of completeness even in decay. Rome the artist sets before you, in painting the triumphal march of Cæsar through the streets after a victorious war. You feel, as you look at those nine pictures, and as you watch the procession step by step, till the whole scene seems to move before you, and you hear the steady tramp of the soldiers and the majestic appeal of the trumpets, as the line sweeps on its stately way—you feel that it is not merely a picture you are looking at—it is a great idea. A picture it is of extraordinary accuracy in detail—with antiquities, statues, busts, medallions, inscriptions, reliefs, and the men who made them, and for whom they were made, as masterful and alert in their military trappings as if they lived again to-day. But you feel

that the artist has not only given you a picture of a striking scene (such, for example, as Mr. Holman Hunt gave in that wonderfully vivid work of his, "London Bridge on the night of the Prince of Wales's wedding"), but he has made it an image of the whole life of a great people. Proud, austere, dominating, is it all, as he has painted it. There is no sign of the luxury and weakness which eat away the hearts of nations, no shadow of unworthy appetite or shameful sin. It is the Rome which our Shakespeare saw when he wrote—

> "The moon of Rome, chaste as the icicle
> That's curdled by the frost from purest snow
> And hangs on Dian's temple."

That is Rome as Mantegna saw it—superb in its pride and in its greatness: and Cæsar is the centre of its life. Severe in its concentration, it embodies all its power in one man. The whole procession is the triumph of Cæsar. For him the trumpets blow, and the prisoners drag their weary steps, and the priests deck the victims, and the costly spoils are saved from the cities that have been sacked—him the soldiers guard and the people worship—*Divus Cæsar*, Cæsar the divine.

Contrast that picture with another. Hear how another seer, long before, had written the judgment which God gave him of that mighty Empire:—

"And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying

with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark, in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" (Rev. xiv. 8–11).

"And I heard another voice from heaven say, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (Rev. xviii. 4, 5).

"Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come!" (Rev. xviii. 10).

That is the vision which was seen by the pure and steadfast soul who had been the beloved disciple of Jesus Christ. So S. John the divine, looking out from his island-prison, saw the Roman world, the world which to other seers, to poets and historians and philosophers, was so great. So S. John saw it: and you cannot dismiss his vision as distorted or fanatical, for there are stern facts behind it. He did not see the true greatness of Rome, you say. That other picture of which I spoke was not untrue. Rome seemed to wise men, to poets, historians, great thinkers, just and honourable men, to be a noble thing, for its even-handed justice and its mighty power. It is not given to any man, even with the inspiration of God, to see the whole of life. But the supreme vision, the limit of man's capacity, comes only to the unclouded eye.

Below that, no sight is complete; it is not seen with a pure moral judgment: it does not pierce into the heart of the national life. There in the picture of magnificent system, of law and justice and order and power, the present is visible to the keen discerning eye. It is an achievement to see the present truly, whether it be a sight of greatness or of danger. It is splendid to see Rome as Vergil or Mantegna saw: to see the England of Elizabeth with the eyes of Shakespeare—to see the best: and it is fine to look unflinchingly on the worst: "behold, an host with horses and chariots round about the city. . . . Alas, my master! how shall we do?" Asleep in ignorance, the people of Dothan saw not even that.

But higher, immeasurably, is the insight of the true moral vision, purged of sin. When S. John looked on Rome, the picture he saw was sin and horror and decay and the awful mystery of the second death. He saw truly: he saw the Roman world with its Cæsar set up for God: he saw within to the moral reality. The ineffaceable evidence of its ruin and its fall has written again what S. John saw of the mighty Empire. There were not the ten found for whose sake it should be saved. Corrupt and degraded, it sank before the barbarians whose strength was unsapped, to whom luxury was unknown, and to whom chastity was still more than a forgotten name. S. John saw truly because in his view there was no faintest suggestion of the worship of power, or pride, or evil—no worship, no thought, of anything but the living and eternal God.

Thank God, there is in that vision the sight of greatness too, but it is the greatness which comes only from the companionship of God. The trembling lad is disheartened by the facts of the world as he, quite truly, sees them. "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" But the answer is, "Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see": for in truth "they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

Brethren, that prayer must be ever on the lips of the Christian to-day. We are, I hope, not of those who think the difficulties of faith, or of life, greater now than they were of old. Each age finds its difficulties real and pressing, and finds it hard to answer them, else were they no obstacles at all. The difficulties of criticism, historical or literary or philosophical, are not to be ignored: they have indeed their host, their horses and chariots. The difficulties of the piteous world of poverty and sin are, may I not say, still more real difficulties, desperately real. It is essential to any progress in the ways of God that we should see them: God suffers them to each age for each age to deal with in the light of His eternal goodness and truth. Whether it be the criticism of the Bible, or the housing of the poor, the first step is to see. Act boldly, swiftly if it may be so, decisively: but first see. If we are to serve our country truly we must recognise her greatness, and see wherein it lies: if we are to be saviours of Society, we must see where it is corrupt and ready to perish, and why.

But what we are to pray for is a still clearer,

completer vision. Not to see the difficulties only but to see through them—as in matters of Bible learning some here have so powerfully helped us to do.[1] Not to shrink from the sight of misery and sin, but to face it boldly, in the light of the Countenance of God. And that, if I mistake not, is the function of all true education. It is for that that we are gathered in such a place as this. First, the patient study which makes facts clear before the mind. This is no time for neglect and idleness. When never before perhaps did the horizon open so widely before man's view, it is not for us to be slack or weary in our course. It is ours to take part among the foremost in the advance; to see the past with the eyes of great historians, to see the worlds with the eyes of the great discoverers of Science, to see man with the eyes of the philosopher and the poet—to see with the eyes of those who are gone before us, if it may not be with our own. But that is only the first step. Our knowledge is to be consummated in the perpetual providence of God. That is its consecration.

We should say, were we prophets, to the young men who surround us: nay, we should say it again and again to inspire and encourage ourselves—Go straight, walk fearlessly like a child with your hand in the Hand of God. You seek truth, you long to know, for the sake of knowledge itself: you seek to know the worst, that you may remedy it; the best, that you may

[1] Preached before the University of Dublin in the Chapel of Trinity College.

rise to it. Be quite fearless: nothing that you seek earnestly, honestly, without flinching, can disappoint or dishearten you in the end. God is Truth. No sore trouble that you find festering in your life, no bitterness that you find clinging round the best life you come to know, can fail to yield in the end to the majesty of the Power Whom you serve. God is Love. Every day, in every difficulty or every success, look to God for the meaning and the answer. "Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see."

Truly, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them," because ours is the cause in which, at whatever cost, through whatever misunderstanding, or temporary loss, the issues are Truth and Love. They must conquer: and when they conquer, well will it be for us if we are seen to have been of their army; for it is the army of the Lord of Hosts.

Thus then we seek the vision of what are the true forces behind all life, the forces which inspire man to rise to the height of God's call upon him. And the knowledge can come only from God: it is the Lord only Who can open the young man's eyes. Forgetting this, men go out into the world doomed to disappointment and failure: the stoutest hearts break down, because the clearest minds see only part of the issues among which they move. Remembering it, they obtain the strength of the clear vision, the invincible courage, which come from the knowledge and love of God. The prophet looks out upon the same scene, disordered, perilous, which the student or the man of action sees,

or which you and I see as we sit quietly at home far from the world's strife: but he sees it in the faith of the vision which has never left him, the vision of the perpetual providence, the sureness of omnipotence, in God Himself. Truly the storm is high, and men's hearts fail them for fear. The waters of the sea are mighty and rage horribly; but yet the Lord which dwelleth on high is mightier: for the Lord remaineth the King for ever.

XXI

SIGNS AND WONDERS

"Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."—S. John iv. 48.

AN officer in the service of the "king," Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, comes to our Lord and asks Him to heal his boy. Christ answers in those words; and He touches a common failure of us all.

We are not satisfied with life as God gives it us, whether it be in the ordinary daily round or in moments of crisis. When we are doing "nothing exciting" (as we say), but just what everybody else does, how can we learn deeply about God (we think to ourselves)? If something really serious happens, if we are brought face to face with some real decision, or if we have some clear direction of God, then it will be all right, we say. We feel sure we can do it then —do the things we don't do now. Perhaps that is the very commonest view of life, among us here: we put off decisions till a time, which we fancy will come, when we must make them.

Or, in quite another way, when the crisis does come, when some terrible affliction is on us, when we have lost those we love and lean on, when we seem cut adrift from the faith we thought we held, or when there is some unknown future of dread drawing near—then we say, "If only God would speak to me clearly now, show me signs and wonders, then indeed I would believe."

But that is not how God ordinarily deals with us. To expect signs and wonders is, for most of us, a very grave, almost the very greatest, temptation of the devil.

Because what God sent us into the world to do is to live our life, to follow where the years of growth and training lead us, to take one step succeeding on the last, to act as those act who understand that life is of one piece and character, a development not a catastrophe. It seems a commonplace enough to say, yet it is what men continually forget though it is of the very first importance that they should remember it — that our life is *one* life, our character is *one* character. You cannot go on neglecting one side of it, in the vague expectation that when the need arises it will be there unharmed, just as it was: it will *not*: nothing stands still, character no more remains unaltered than life does.

Not one single power or faculty that we have can be left (as it were) to take care of itself: the man, the whole man, must act, and train himself, and *use* his powers, just as it is the whole man

that lives. One part of you cannot die, in body, or mind, or soul, without spreading death to the rest.

My brothers, is there any danger of your forgetting this? Do you ever think that it is some different faculty by which you do all the things you ought to do, read, prepare the work you have to do, answer your friends truthfully, "play the game" like a true Englishman, some other faculty from that by which you look religious difficulties in the face, or see clearly what your temptations are, or recognise your sins for what they really are, or listen to the voice of your conscience, or answer to what you know to be the claim on you of Almighty God? It is not: it is the same. For our religion we must employ "the same faculties as those by which through grace we fulfil our ordinary duty and speak the ordinary truth."[1] You cannot be untruthful, or impure, or idle, you cannot neglect the duty which God has given you, be you old or young, teacher or learner, and yet be ready when a real or sudden call comes, to do what all along you have known in your heart was to be done, if you were man, true man, at all.

And that in plain words of to-day is the meaning of the Church's Lent. If we keep it properly, it is a time of training, which is to help us towards being *always* strong and alert—not strong for a while, strung up into fitness for a while, with a fitness to be thrown off the moment the training is over—but alert always,

[1] Waggett, *Age of Decision*, p. 59.

and more and more ready as the days go on, with our answer to the call of God.

For, in plain fact, nothing comes upon us without preparation. God, indeed, in His mercy, and by His grace—if we do not refuse it—is preparing us: we are preparing ourselves.

The nobleman, the king's officer, who came to Jesus in Galilee, should not have looked for something quite different from the ordinary blessing of God on his life. God had guided him, God had guarded his boy: no less was he now in God's Hands than always before, and no more. Then,—now,—as Browning says—

> "Before man's First, and after man's poor Last,
> God operated and will operate."

So indeed, and always, for us all: there is no such thing as a hasty call of God. Years make you what you are; and God will not save you trouble in making your own character. How well it has been said—and how much the words mean:—"Great saints, and great sinners, bear marks of much time and many strivings."[1]

And yet, after all, the miracles do come: the king's officer was to see that. There are for us all, sooner or later, those σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα of which S. John speaks: there are the signs that suggest, and half reveal, those deeper truths which are not at first or easily plain to us all; and there are the wonders that strike across the current of our lives and give the shock of surprise

[1] Thoughts from *Words of Strength and Wisdom* (Bishop Steere).

and the sense of a power beyond this earth, beyond the life we know. But there again we are not cut adrift from our own natures, our faculties, the characters we have made. Surely it is not for nothing that that word τέρατα, wonders, is never used by itself in the New Testament. God's wonders are not apart from, but a very part and consequence of, the ordinary life of man.

"Thy son liveth": so Jesus with a word healed the sick boy, and so certainly He will heal us. So certainly the sign and the wonder will come into our lives, if only we are ready for them, if only we have the open eye, the heart unhardened, the listening ear.

"The readiness is all." The preparation—to take any duty, however small it seems, and do it: do it carefully, do it sincerely, do it (if God gives you faith) as though you did it not for man, but (as in truth you really do) for God. Never mind your feelings, your slackness, or your reluctance, but go straight on: and so—as a wise man said, who was both learned and a hero, "you will find other duties grow more easy, and some sins grow less pleasant, and before you are yourself aware, others will pronounce you pure."[1] That in itself, perhaps, will be the sign; will it not also be the wonder, a greater wonder still?

The man who has chosen to listen for the Voice of God, to serve Jesus Christ in whatever way of life He calls, who has taken each day's duty as it comes and discharged it, is not the man who finds life dull and is

[1] Steere, *op. cit.* p. 38.

tempted to waste it, or—that horror of our time—to end it by his own act: he is one who finds life always vivid and always fresh; he does not ask for signs, but they are always about his way; he does not strain to see wonders, but God shows him continually that greatest miracle of all, the wonder of His Love, in the Face of Jesus Christ.

XXII

THE POWER OF WEAKNESS[1]

"If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern my weakness."—2 Cor. xi. 30.

S. PAUL is fearing lest the Corinthian converts, his dear children in Christ, dear almost especially, as many children are, because of their waywardness, should fall back from the high standard that has been set them. And therefore he writes them a letter, a very personal letter, full, as we say, of himself, of his own life, struggles, work, his own services to them in the past, his own claim on them now. And he is careful to show that he does not forget their difficulties. He sees how they are beset by temptations on every side, the temptations that belong to a great city where there are very many men and women to whom the word of Christ, the sacrifice of Christ, the love of Christ, have no meaning. He sees how very hard it is for them to stand upright in the Gospel of God. And then he begins to emphasise, to dwell upon, the fact—the fact as he has found it in his own

[1] Sermon preached in S. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday evening, November 25, 1906.

experience—that the greatest gifts that have come to him, the greatest blessings from God, the greatest successes in his wonderful work, have come in and through weakness. A tremendous experience it is that he recalls; but the sum of it all is that Christ's power is made perfect in weakness. So His servant glories in his weaknesses; when he is weak, then he is strong.

What a strange saying, what an astonishing paradox, and from such a man! S. Paul is one of the very few men, every one must admit, who have exercised a real influence on the whole current of the world's history. There are some scholars who would set down almost the whole of Christ's teaching, as we have it now, to him. There are many who still discuss and dissect his writings to find in them a system, a Paulinism, which shall be set beside the great philosophies of ancient and modern times. And there can be no doubt at all that, system or no system, what he taught, as he taught it, has had far more influence on the world than any of the philosophies. It certainly does sound strange that such a man, when he looks back upon his life, for the purpose of helping others by his experience, should find the best part of it all to lie in his weaknesses.

It is not at all what we should expect. It is not what we find in the opinions of other great men. Who can imagine the great Napoleon, or Bismarck, the creator of modern Germany—why, they would not have acknowledged that they had any weakness;

who can imagine Darwin, almost the greatest of all men of science, or even that great statesman of ours who so deeply influenced the politics of fifty years of Queen Victoria's reign down to his death, saying that —saying quite that—that the weaknesses in their lives were the things they most gloried in? No, most great men, most good men even, would say that their glory came when they saw something that ought to be done and had strength to do it. But here is a great thinker, a great man of action, a man who by his particular presentation of the truth as it came to him has almost certainly more deeply and enduringly influenced the world than any of those four I named, laying a special stress on the very thing that would seem to conflict with his power to make the truth effective. His weakness, his physical "thorn in the flesh," the messenger of Satan as he calls it, his continual suffering, labour, peril, apparent failure, the greatness of his task so heroically undertaken and seemingly rewarded with such infinitesimal success—that is the thing that he will glory in.

I suppose that if we were to look into this strange paradox we should not find it so inexplicable. Why does S. Paul glory in the things that belong to his weakness? Not, I imagine, in themselves. He does not say that, like some of the medieval ascetics or the ancient monks and hermits, he thought pain, illness, and hunger, others' treachery, his own failure, in themselves good—that he rejoiced and gloried in them as they were. He was quite ready, I think, to avoid

them if that did not mean giving up the great object of his life—the effective preaching of Jesus Christ. But he gloried in his weakness, surely, because of the use, when it came to him in its different forms, he put it to. It is because all these things—poverty, distress, failure, sickness—throw the soul back upon God; they all "demand and cry out for faith in God."[1] It is not that man in weakness really needs God more than in health and strength, but that he knows better that he needs, that he is thrown back upon the ultimate realities, the spiritual and the eternal. And the man or woman who will feel this most profoundly is the man or woman who has suffered most.

Let us look at S. Paul's experience: it explains what he says. The great impression of his life, if he were to sum it up after studying it carefully, would be, I think, how much he had lost. So far as we can judge, he had lost, as life went on, everything he had, and, most of all, all his friends. His life was a continual surrender. First, there were the voluntary surrenders—the leaving home to enter the new life of a scholar under a great teacher, buoyed up by ambition, no doubt, by pleasing anticipations, by love of learning, but still a wrench to break old ties and to break them completely. Has it struck you that we never hear anything of S. Paul's father and mother and home? Yet that was as nothing to the next great surrender. When Christ spoke to him on the Damascus road, when the humble Christian baptized

[1] Phillips Brooks, *The Light of the World*, p. 166.

him secretly in the mean house, he gave up everything that he had set before him—ambition, which had been swiftly realising itself; a great undertaking, a trusted responsibility, a strong association bound by religious ties; friendships which had gathered about him, bright hopes and prospects—all. He was a scholar, a Pharisee, a trusted leader: he became a Christian, despised, persecuted, in danger of his life. It was the great surrender. Yet others, which may have been even harder to bear, followed it. He must not stay at Jerusalem, the home of the infant Church. He must not stay with the Apostles, those who linked him visibly and certainly to the life and memory of his Lord. He must go out into the world, with new friends whom he had himself to train, to preach the Gospel, contrary to the whole traditions of his up-bringing, and even, it may be, to his own first ideas of Christ's religion, to preach the Gospel to every creature. And then those about him, friends on whom he depended, whom he talked with heart to heart about the things that were supreme in their lives—they, too, were lost. Some, because different work called them apart; some, we cannot doubt, by death; some, most bitter, by desertion. There is that most pathetic word wrung out of him while all the time he is thinking and planning for others—"Only Luke is with me!" But still there was the warmth, wherever he went, of the Church, the brotherly love, the mutual assurance in persecution, the mutual joy and happiness in the communion of the Lord. And

then those, too, are taken, and he is left in prison, chained day and night to a soldier guard. Surely, no man ever lost more. To no man could the weaknesses that he spoke of mean more real, more heart-searching deprivation.

But then it came—it was coming more fully with each thing that he lost—the glorious vision of what God really is, and man in Him. As you stand afar off and apart you come to see more clearly. You see what the training has been to you when it is over, what home was when you have one no more, what friends were when they are gone. Every time of solitude, deprivation, friendlessness, has an enormous strength to give. We should win from it larger, truer ideas of what the world is, our fellow-men, ourselves, God. That was the strength that came to men like Hannington, imprisoned by savages, stricken with fever, and called out to be murdered while the ink was still wet on the page where he had written that he was held up by that 30th Psalm, "Therefore shall every good man sing of Thy praise without ceasing: O my God, I will give thanks unto Thee for ever": the strength that is seen in the last words of Gordon to his sister, when it was too late for rescue—"God rules all. I am quite happy, thank God. And, like Lawrence—I have tried to do my duty." It is the time of weakness that makes the hero and the saint.

For there are two ways in which to bear trial and weakness. The one is to let them drive us into ourselves, to dwell on our own sufferings, our own sorrows,

the things that we have lost and the shadows that close slowly round us. That way always makes men hard and cruel, though they do not know it; always makes them dwell on the faults of others and not on their own; dwell on them and find a strange sort of pleasure in fancying—for it is fancy—that others are less wise, less thoughtful, less good than themselves. That is the way to increase unhappiness, not to lighten it. The one way to find happiness, however much you suffer, is always to look out for the good points in other people, always to think the best of them; for, after all, if you are honest, you know the worst about yourself. That, indeed, is the second way in which we may bear trial and weakness, the way which S. Paul knew when he said that he was "sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing," that if he gloried, it was his weakness which gave him the cause. So it is with sorrow. And so also there are two ways in which we may bear the marks that have been set upon us by our sins. "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us, but, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The worst weakness is that which comes from sin, but the greatest strength is that which comes, through penitence, from the absolution of God. When you see that you will know what S. Paul meant when he said that he could glory in his weakness: it is the time—the time of all others, it may be for some of us—when we come to feel how great life is and how good is God.

So the message comes not only to the old and the suffering, but to those of you who are young and to whom God has given such priceless blessings in your strength and happiness. Who can ask you, perhaps you say, to think of weakness when God has not given it you to bear? I know the truth of that thought, but yet I say that the message comes to all. Not only are there some among the young who have already deeply suffered, some who even now feel bitter disappointments, and sorrow; but also I know that for all a time will come when you will need, if you are to make of your lives what God means you to make, to take this lesson of S. Paul's to your soul.

There is a wonderful power that comes with weakness and loss. It comes not only to the heroes and saints but to men who seem cast in quite other moulds. A year or two ago were published the last letters of the most original artist of our generation.[1] He died when he was twenty-five, and he would not have been much more than thirty if he were living now—who, in spite of, almost in opposition to, every great tradition of his time, created for himself and for the world that followed him, a strange, new, deeply impressive and characteristic art which owed everything to his own genius. At the height of his brilliant success came a deadly illness. You can trace in his scanty, scrappy letters, childish often and affected though they are, the growth of a new character, a new and wonderful peace and beauty, as Christ came to him and touched him

[1] *Last Letters of Aubrey Beardsley*, 1904.

with the hand of love. Surely, with all his enjoyment shattered, and his happy powers decayed, he might glory in his weakness, as he drew nearer and nearer to the Paradise of God. Life, history, as you look below the surface, are full of this great wonder, how men grow strong through weakness and happy by what they have had taken away.

So we end. The deepest lesson of weakness comes from the Cross. If you feel that you are losing your sense of the nearness of God, that, when the things you have been brought up to believe in are questioned, denied, mocked at, you have no answer ready because the questionings have eaten into your own heart; even if you feel as if the love of God was failing you because you cannot tell if there be a God at all—then remember the things that you do know—that "to be brave and true and pure is better than to be cowardly and false and foul."[1]—You do know that right is right, that the serious work, the happy companionship, the unselfish sympathy with others who perhaps are *not* strong, not industrious, not happy, does bring its own reward. Your time of weakness—for weakness it is to be, for the time, bereft of God—may bring you to see clearly what is real goodness, real work, real duty—what lies behind all these overlaying cares of our beset and hurried life. Only let your true desires be set on character, duty, goodness, and God will bring you to them, through the weak things that are temporal, to the things of power that are eternal. That is the lesson

[1] Phillips Brooks, *The Light of the World*, p. 174.

of the Cross. It was a great victory. Weakness, failure, desertion; so it seems. But not one word from the Lord, of blame of others; not one word that does not mean love, and patience, and forgiveness, and trust: those are the greatest things in the world, because they are the links between us and God; they are the strongest, because they cast the soul simply and entirely on our Father Which is in Heaven.

XXIII

THE UNCHANGEABLE CHRIST

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."—Heb. xiii. 8.

HOW bold a thing to say! Surely it belongs to the Ages of Faith: a Christian preacher could say it then without fear of contradiction. So, one fancies, many may feel when they hear those strong words to-day. Once they were a statement of common belief; now they sound like a challenge. To say them unhesitatingly was possible in early ages, but is not possible now. There was an Age of Miracles; men tell you that age has passed away. There was an Age of Faith. Has not that gone too? What a Christian preacher of the first days, with his limited outlook, could say, is impossible for a Christian preacher in the twentieth century who reads and thinks. Again and again critics proclaim to-day that Jesus Christ is not the same as He was to those who first preached Him, not the same as to the Catholics of the Middle Age, not the same as to the Reformers, not the same even as to our fathers and mothers from whom we first learnt the Gospel story.

We are confronted to-day with very different conceptions of Christ. There is the historical Jesus, whom men have sought with patient persistence (and often with meticulous perversity) in the pages of the Evangelists: Jesus as He lived, a Syrian peasant in an age of unsettlement, a teacher of ignorant men, interpreted by those who never saw His face or heard His voice, a man who uttered prophecies that were not fulfilled, who was entirely the creature of His age, never really transcending its limitations, and only fancied to do so by those who read their own ideas into the fragments of His sayings which they reconstructed. History, they tell us, is the answer to dogma: the Christ of history refutes the creeds.

There is the Christ of Liberal Protestantism—non-miraculous, didactic, conquering men by the force of His moral character, thoroughly modern in His outlook, the ideal man as seen by a pious, unsectarian German professor.

There is the Christ of Eschatology, a seer, a mystic, who gathered to Himself the Messianic expectations of His people, and lived only in the hope of a future Kingdom of God which He foresaw to be close at hand, and died that He might consecrate: a Christ Who was not primarily moral but spiritual, not of this world, even as set to make it the best of all possible worlds, but of the new, the future, the new heaven and new earth wherein—not here—dwelleth righteousness.

And there is the sentimental Christ, the figure which is Divine only because it is so beautifully human,

which is composed out of those fragments of the Gospel which appeal to the individual's religious emotion. Christ in this view was really a combination from the Gospel of S. John and the melancholy æstheticism of a certain stage of what we call Victorian art: He was a modern, embodying what Renan called "the delicious theology of Love."

These are versions of Jesus Christ with which we have been presented in the last generation. Some of them still survive, and even allure. And there is still eager investigation, fierce criticism, and a sense of pious discontent mingled with tremulous dread, in the "quest of the historical Jesus."

I need not dwell longer upon the fact of to-day. We all know it. Our churches prove it, and there are magazines which devote page after page to the endeavour to discuss it or explain it, or explain it away.

What a contrast, a pitiful contrast, to those bold words, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,"—once a proud boast, then a challenge, now, it may seem, a discredited fable. So, perhaps, many turn from the critics, and shut their Bibles, and dismiss the Jesus of their childhood, and try to pray.

Brethren, let us not cease to pray, but let us think too. Go back to the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews and we shall not find his position of assurance so unapproachable. Look again at the modern alternatives to his declaration, and we shall not find one of them that can be proved secure.

Was it so much easier for the writer of the Epistle

to the Hebrews than for us to say those words, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever"? He wrote some thirty-five years after the Crucifixion, almost at the climax of a time of change, when his fellow-Hebrews were isolated and disheartened. They had cast off the exclusive religion of the Temple, with its splendid ritual and its ties of family and race, and instead had what must often have seemed the disappointing insignificance of Christian ceremonial and the separation from many an association of personal love and national patriotism. Persecution was surrounding them: the gravest dangers, the most insistent terrors, seemed to be at hand. And the eschatological hope on which some may have built had not been fulfilled. Christ had not returned in glory; and there were no signs of His return or His triumph. The religious atmosphere of the Hebrew Christians was charged with doubt, and disappointment, and loneliness. It was at such a time that a teacher, a man of their own, with the love and inspiration of the old covenant behind him, had the courage not only to point out that the Law was in its essence transitory and the Gospel the fulfilment of the whole purpose of God's creative act and man's historic development, but also to declare that the crucified Nazarene, made a shame among men, was the same, through Whom in the beginning the worlds were made, and Who through all His suffering life on earth, His rejection and death, and the absence from His people which now tried their faith—yes, He was the same yesterday,

to-day, and for ever. If it is bold to say those words now, it was almost incredibly bold to say them then, when Christianity had won no great visible triumphs, but was embodied only in a small, despised, lonely sect.

Indeed, indeed, the difficulties of Christians to-day are not so great as those which beset the Hebrew disciples of the first century. One by one, in our own time, the modern solutions of the problem of Christology have broken down. It has been proved impossible to reconstruct a Christ of history who is non-miraculous, Who left only the influence of His short life on earth; the documents will not allow it, historical criticism will not allow it; you cannot discover a Jesus who is only an amiable Syrian peasant.

And it is impossible to make the Jesus of the Gospels a believer only in morality and righteousness, an ethical reformer, a philanthropist, a pious and muscular preacher of a Gospel of physical health and earthly success. Tyrrell was right when he said that such a Christ "is only the reflection of a Liberal Protestant face seen at the bottom of a deep well."

Nor is the picture of a Christ Who looked only for a quick-coming judgment possible. His whole teaching was that of One Who would make men like and work independent of results, in the light of the love of God, in the sunshine of His Presence, knowing not what the day might bring forth, but confident in each hour's sufficiency of claim, of labour, of grace, and confident in the eternity of the principles of righteous-

ness and in the continual care of God, looking on life here and beyond as one whole, ordered by the Divine Creator and Governor. Judgment is not an imminent catastrophe, it is something continuous and eternal. Man lives not in the fear of a sudden Divine appearance, but by the grace of a daily inspiration. Christ's life, Christ's Messiahship, preaches not an end but an eternity. He does not minimise the value of the present by contrasting it with the future; to Him present and future—and past, too—are all one. A purely eschatological Christ is a figment which critical study of the Gospels makes impossible.

Still more impossible, one may say, is the sentimental Christ of a modern humanitarian. Jesus is before all things a Judge—not a divider of worldly goods, not a merely political or social reformer, but One Who pierces to the dividing of soul and spirit, quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. As He goes about the city streets and the country roads He sees into men's hearts, He reads the Samaritan woman, the righteous Pharisee, the young ruler, the sinner taken in the very act, and at last the penitent robber on the cross: He reads them like an open book. He has power on earth to forgive sins, and He is the Judge before Whom all men will stand at the latter day. All one-sided explanations of His Personality fail. The Jesus Christ of the Gospels, of S. Paul and S. James, of the Church which learnt from them, of the history of the world since He died on Calvary, is unique, and manifold, and eternal.

He cannot, even the keenest critics are forced to admit, be confined to His own time. He belongs to ours. He was not only the contemporary of the Apostles—His very words show it—He is our contemporary too. But He belongs not only to our time: He belongs to the days of S. Augustine, and of S. Louis, and of Savonarola, and of Joseph Butler, of John Wesley, and of John Keble. Can we doubt that He belongs, too, to the days that are still to come?

There is no temporal Christ, sentimental or experimental, merely Protestant or merely Messianic. But what is He, for Whom nearly twenty centuries ago the great claim was made?

My brethren, we still answer, He is "One Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father." He it is "By whom all things were made," and "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate," Who "suffered and was buried, and the third day rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of the Father," Who also "shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose Kingdom shall have no end." "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

My brethren, in every essential matter as regards religion and in regard to Jesus Christ, our age is not different from others; it is the same. Not merely were the difficulties of the first age as great as or greater than our own. But the revelation of Jesus Christ to us is the same as it was to men then, as it was to the Apostles, as it was to our own parents. He reveals Himself now as He revealed Himself of old, not to all, not in overpowering argument, not to those who will not hear or see. Never will God satisfy an intellectual quest which is not a moral quest also. If you think God can be found by philosophy, or history, or mathematics, by pure argument or pure thought, you will never discover Him: and that because God is Righteousness, and Justice, and Mercy, and Love; and if these do not glow in your heart when you seek, your search will never bring you to His feet. There is the stony ground of the parable from which the wind blows away the seed or the birds devour it. Nor will you find Him without patience. Even the revelation He has given you may pass away from you if you have not depth of heart to hold it, or if the deceits, or the labours, or the amusements, of the everyday world choke your enthusiasm for the right.

It is with religion as it is with all other things in God's creation: no man can feel the delight of music who closes his heart: no man can paint who will not hold a brush: no man can speak with a foreigner who will not learn his language. It is not arbitrary, it is not strange, it is part of the whole system of an

ordered world, that there are those to whom Jesus will never reveal Himself, because of their unbelief. He is the same to-day as He was yesterday.

But He is not deaf to our beseechings. He does not close His ears to those who are crying for the light. Even when we are foolish, and blind to the miracles of grace that are going on daily before our eyes, the resurrection from the death of sin to the life of goodness, the beauty of Christian sacrifice and Christian forgiveness, even when we are slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken and are speaking still, He will reveal Himself as of old to those who sincerely seek and pray. He does reveal Himself still, interpreting the Scriptures and blessing the broken bread.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Banish the delusion of an Age of Faith somewhere in the past that is gone never to return. There never was an Age of Faith except to the faithful, to the men and women of honest and true heart. And from them it is never absent. Be they unlearned and ignorant, simple folk whom He shall judge according to their right; or students of His word who set truth, regardless of all consequences, ever before their face; mothers who watch their children's tender years; men who struggle to uphold the standard of honesty in labour, in commerce, or in the fields; servants of the people and the State, priests who watch for the souls of men, or rulers of mighty empires or leaders of human thought—He is at their side, He will answer

their questionings, and He will guide their ways. Between the Christ of the Gospels and ourselves are the centuries that prove it. And still the proof abides in the humble and single heart. Truly Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

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